EMMA;

OR,

The CHILD of SORROW.

A

NOVEL.

In TWO VOLUMES.

VOLUME I.

LONDON,
Printed for T. LOWNDES, No 77, in Fleet-ſtreet.
MDCCLXXVI.

BRITISH MUSEUM

EMMA;

OR,

The CHILD of SORROW.

LETTER I.

To Lady CLEVELAND.

Stretton-House.

AH! what avails it to be young and fair,
To dreſs with negligence, or dance with air?

All theſe brilliant accompliſhments are loſt, or their purpoſes wholly deſtroyed, by the whimſical, (I was going to ſay,) but the partial Will of my Father. To be parcelled out and conſigned over, like

a bale of goods, to a man, of whoſe perſon I have not the remoteſt idea, is a circumſtance of all others the moſt diſagreeable: Yet, my dear Lady *Cleveland*, I am in this hopeful, or rather hopeleſs ſituation. *Which way ſhall I turn me, how ſhall I decide?* Oh! take the man, by all means, ſays Prudence. It certainly will be the moſt *prudent* method of acting, I allow; I wiſh I was as certain of its being likewiſe as *happy*.—But why do I talk of deciding? I am not a free agent; therefore nothing depends on my own will: My Father has deprived me of the right of election. Perhaps he has ſaved me trouble. I have nothing in the world to do, but to give my hand to Lord *Stretton* as ſoon as he chuſes to let me know he is ready to accept it;—or, indeed, I might refuſe, if I prefer beggary to him. There is, in my caſe, no alternative.

I am ſick to death whenever I think of my intricate and unpleaſing affairs, and never fail to drive them out of my head as faſt as poſſible, with—no matter what. The time will ſhortly come, when my Couſin and deſtined Huſband will arrive. If he ſhould prove agreeable, my pleaſure will be greatly enhanced, by having at preſent ſo little idea of that circumſtance happening. Should he, on the contrary, be diſpleaſing—Why ſhould I rob myſelf

of

of the few weeks I can call my own, by anticipating an evil I cannot prevent? So be gone from my thoughts thou buſy intruder; if I cannot *think* to pleaſe myſelf, I'll bid adieu to reflection. Did you think I had been ſo much of the Philoſopher?

My journey hither was as agreeable as the caſe would admit of. I own I cannot bear a *ſola* party: A very fortunate circumſtance in favour of Lord *Stretton*.—Pſhaw—why muſt he pop in upon every occaſion?—Would to Heaven it was with him as it is with many, *out of ſight out of mind*. Mrs. *Middleton* was ſo kind as to meet me at *Stretton-Houſe*, and aſſures me, ſhe will not leave me, till the moſt important event of my life is ſettled. I am infinitely obliged to her, as perhaps there never was any young woman ſo totally friendleſs as myſelf. No Mother, Aunt, Siſter, or even Adviſer; though the laſt is unneceſſary to one, whoſe path through life is already chalked out for her. I have a Friend, and a tenderly eſteemed one, in my dear Lady *Cleveland*. But I want ſuch an one continually with me. My amiable Mrs. *Middleton* will be of great comfort to me. Her converſation, while it amuſes, will inſtruct me. I wiſh you to know her, I am ſure you will be charmed with her. I have often wondered how it ſhould hap-

pen, that with all her natural and acquired accompliſhments, ſhe ſhould be of that claſs called Old Maids. What blindneſs in the men! There might, however, be ſtrong reaſons. I wiſh to know ſomething of her hiſtory. I once hinted ſuch a thing; but ſomehow or other ſhe waved it — I have hardly thought of making an effort towards it ſince, as the pleaſure of the preſent moment in her company prevents any neceſſity of recurring to what has paſt.

And now, my dear Lady *Cleveland*, permit me to thank you for the pleaſure I have reaped in your ſociety, and for which I ſhall ever retain the moſt grateful remembrance. My obligations to my Lord muſt not be forgot. Do me the honour to write to me ſoon, and believe me you ſhall find me ſtrictly faithful to you in every circumſtance. I ſhall not fail, if you permit me, to acquaint you with every thing concerning me, which my opinion of your friendſhip will make me judge intereſting to you. Kiſs my little Coz for me.

I am your ever devoted Friend,

LOUISA STRETTON.

LET-

LETTER II.

To Lady LOUISA STRETTON.

Cleveland-Place.

I DOUBT, my dear *Louiſa*, you will not experience much pleaſure in my correſpondence, as I have no ſubject to write upon; and after I have told you how much I eſteem you, and how very very much I regret your abſence, all the reſt of my letter will be but ringing the ſame changes.

But why then, will you ſay, did you take up your pen, when you was prepoſſeſſed with the idea of your being ſtupid? Another day you might have been brighter. No, my Dear, 'tis the ſame with me to-day, to-morrow, and for ever.

Perhaps I may infect you with my melancholy, — a melancholy which the return of *this* day rather augments; — but no more of that.

I cannot think myſelf intitled to your gratitude for much pleaſure while you was with us, but I am ſure thoſe four months were to me the happieſt I have known for ſome years. Your ſprightly, yet tender converſation, reſtored a calm to my mind,

which I have not poſſeſſed a long time. But you have left us, and I again ſink into my former ſtate. Would to Heaven I could rouſe myſelf out of it! Yet all my efforts are vain, and long habit has engrafted it on my nature.

What charming ſpirits you have! How lightly do you ſpeak of an event, the moſt momentous of your life—your Marriage! and that too with a man, of whoſe perſon even you have not the remoteſt idea. I tremble for you, my dear Girl, and your fancied ſecurity adds to my fears on your account.

I doubt there is little chance of being tolerably happy in the married State, if it is entered upon with indifference only; if there is a prepoſſeſſion againſt the party, I think unhappineſs will certainly enſue; but if a partiality for another is joined to this, ah! what tongue can expreſs what the heart then feels! Oh! my Friend, may you for ever remain inſenſible to the agonies which at this moment rend the hearts of too many in that hapleſs ſituation! You will not, however, my Dear, have this laſt and greateſt of human evils to encounter, as I have often heard you ſay, you never felt a partiality in favour of any man. Taught, as you have been, to look on Lord *Stretton* as your future Huſband, you have never

never allowed yourſelf to think too much on one object; you were likewiſe ſecured from the importunities of the men, from the determination of your Father being ſo well known: Nothing leſs could have ſecured you from their addreſſes; and the charming ſenſibility I have experienced from you, in the friendſhip you have ſhewn me, during our acquaintance, convinces me of your having a very ſuſceptible heart, therefore it is moſt likely there might have been ſome one who would have gained your affections had they been unreſtrained.

Heaven ſend Lord *Stretton* may prove agreeable in his perſon and manner! I think he cannot help loving you; and if he behaves to you with delicacy and tenderneſs, he will create in your breaſt a degree of gratitude, which will make your union more felicitous than you perhaps imagine. Thus, though you are not in love with your Huſband, his behaviour, and your good ſenſe and virtue, will prevent your looking up to any other man for your happineſs.

I flatter myſelf you will find him pleaſing, or ſurely your Father could never be ſo violently attached to him, as to deprive you of your birth-right, unleſs you became his Wife. I hope every thing will turn out for the beſt, and that you will be as happy as I wiſh you. I ſhall borrow a part of it,

in the ſincere intereſt I take in all your affairs.

I think Lord *Cleveland* did not act right in permitting you to go home; as being a relation, he ought, in my mind, to have afforded you his protection. I was ſenſibly mortified at his conduct. I really believe he was afraid of the trouble of it. You know him to be ſtrangely indolent, unleſs he thinks it neceſſary on his own particular account to exert himſelf; he then can be indefatigable. You are not deſtitute, however; Mrs. *Middleton* will anſwer every purpoſe; yet it certainly would have been moſt proper to have had Lord *Stretton*'s firſt introduction at *Cleveland-Place.* It was undoubtedly inconſiderate in Lord *Cleveland*, if I place it in the moſt favourable light, a point in which I ſtrive to ſee all my Huſband's actions; but we cannot always ſucceed as we would.

I wiſh to be acquainted with your Friend; that title is ſufficient to make me anxious to ſee her. There may be ſomething very intereſting in her hiſtory, yet not merely from her being an Old Maid. Do you think it impoſſible to be ſo from choice? May not her life have been a ſmooth gliding ſtream, unwarped by paſſion and unruffled by the ſtorms of affliction?

tion? Her maiden ſtate may have contributed to her having paſſed a life of eaſe. Cares ſhe certainly has avoided, and pleaſures are ever precarious. Ah! how happy ſhould I once have thought myſelf, had I been allowed to remain one of that claſs, ſo much deſpiſed, ſo much contemned! But why do I ſpeak of myſelf? How natural it is, on every occaſion, to revert to one's ſelf. It is a diſagreeable ſubject; I am for ever tearing myſelf from it, yet ſtill return. However, I will not at preſent tire you with it, therefore muſt bid you adieu.

I am for ever yours,

EMMA CLEVELAND.

LETTER III.

To Lady CLEVELAND.

RECEIVE my thanks, my ever dear Lady *Cleveland*, for your welcome Epiſtle. Will you forgive me for making Mrs. *Middleton* the *Confidante* of part of it? I mean to return the obligation, by relating to you the paſſages of her life, which the peruſal of the latter part of

your Letter has induced her to give me. You aſked me, if I thought it impoſſible to be an Old Maid from choice? — I repeated to her all you ſaid on that topic. "Ah! my dear *Louiſa*, (ſaid ſhe, with the tears gathering in her eyes,) my life has not been that *ſmooth gliding ſtream, unwarped by paſſion and unruffled by the ſtorms of affliction*, that Lady *Cleveland* ſeems to ſuppoſe: On the contrary, keen anguiſh has harrowed up my ſoul, and ſtill the wounds bleed on the painful recollection."

"I am ſorry, (cried I,) I ſhould have mentioned any thing which recalls to your mind former griefs; yet I muſt own, my curioſity is exceedingly excited: Could you gratify it without encreaſing your diſtreſs, I ſhould eſteem it a very ſingular favour; if otherwiſe, I will ſuppreſs my deſires, and ſpeak my wiſhes into ſilence." — "My Dear, (replied the amiable woman,) I know I may confide in your diſcretion; I will not, therefore, conceal from you any part of my life. The circumſtances of it have been productive of infinite ſorrow to me; but a length of years, with a pious reſignation to the indiſputable will of Prodence, has, at laſt, worked a calm in my troubled breaſt. It is a long time ſince my misfortunes, or the authors of them, had any exiſtence, except in my remembrance.

brance. Attend then, my dear Lady *Louiſa*, to the Hiſtory of an Old Maid; a Hiſtory which may excite in your tender boſom ſome affecting ſenſations.

" My Father was a Phyſician of very great eminence at *Briſtol Hot-Wells:* By his profeſſion he had acquired a conſiderable fortune, which I was likely to be the ſole inheritor of. When I was about Eighteen, my Father brought home to our houſe, a young Gentleman, who had been ſome time at *Briſtol*, for the recovery of his health. The deepeſt dejection of ſpirits ſeemed to overpower him. He was not able to mix with the gay and healthy part of the company, and it was wholly unfit for him to aſſociate with the invalids, as their condition would only augment his diſorder. He was continually our gueſt. If I was to deſcribe his perſon to you, you would not wonder it made an impreſſion on me. But his manner was far more engaging. Ah! good God! how amiable he was! My Father perfectly idolized him: He won the hearts of all who ſaw him, by the gentleneſs of his manners; our ſociety ſeemed to recover him, more than the medicines he took. By degrees his extreme melancholy left him, and only the moſt engaging penſiveneſs remained.

"One day, on my ſpeaking of the length of time he had been indiſpoſed, I aſked him what had firſt occaſioned his diſorder? My queſtion brought tears into his eyes, and his breaſt heaved with ſighs; I intreated his pardon, and was going to leave the room, as not caring to be witneſs of his diſtreſs; a diſtreſs I felt too ſenſibly to enable me to conceal my emotions. He begged me to ſtay, ſaying, there was no ſecret in his Hiſtory; at leaſt he wiſhed not to have one from me; that he had been ſingularly unfortunate, though, he thanked Heaven, he hoped he might ſay undeſervedly ſo. I will relate to you all he ſaid in his own words:—"At the deſire of my Father, when I was about Twenty years of age, I paid my addreſſes to a young Lady of fortune in our neighbourhood. Though the propoſal firſt came from my Father, yet I found, on a nearer acquaintance, I ſhould put no force on my inclinations in marrying her. She was handſome, and accompliſhed. In a ſhort time her company became very dear to me, and I loved her in preference to any woman I had ever ſeen. She returned my paſſion in ſuch a manner as convinced me, ſhe had no objection to my addreſſes, and a few months united us. We lived upon extreme good terms, though, I own, I

was

was ſorry to ſee an unbounded paſſion for Public Places and High Life in my Wife; the more ſo as my taſte was rather domeſtic. My remonſtrances, however, were not well received, and I forbore them, as my fortune would allow of her living the life ſhe liked.

"Among other places, we viſited *Bath*; there we became acquainted with a Gentleman whoſe diſpoſition ſeemed ſuited to our inclinations; in ſhort, we contracted a ſtrict intimacy with him. According to a promiſe we had engaged from him, he came to pay us a viſit at my ſeat in the country. While he was with us I was ſeized with a diſorder which confined me a long time. During my illneſs, my Wife and I had ſeparate apartments. She left me that we had before occupied, and went to one on that ſide the houſe which was reſerved for company. One night I was awaked with a violent ſmell of burning, which, on my ſitting up in bed, encreaſed ſo much as to leave no doubt that the houſe was on fire. I inſtantly ſtarted up, and ran into the paſſage; how was I ſhocked at ſeeing the flames burſt forth from my Wife's room! I ruſhed towards the door in a ſtate of deſpair, and the moment I opened it, the whole floor ſunk in. Self-preſervation urged my flight; with

with the utmoſt difficulty I eſcaped with my life. My Wife, my Friend, and a Maid-ſervant periſhed in this horrid conflagration. My grief knew no bounds; I was reduced to the moſt deplorable ſtate; I loathed life, and ceaſed not to wiſh earneſtly for death.

"My Friends uſe devery poſſible method to reſtore calm to my diſtracted mind; but their efforts ſeemed loſt upon me. My Father, at laſt, took upon him to tell me, that although the death of my Wife had been ſo dreadful, yet ſhe merited not the ſevere affliction I ſhewed for her loſs. He told me, he had good authority for what he advanced: She had but ill repayed my tenderneſs to her, by a ſhameful attachment to my treacherous *Bath*-acquaintance; that their illegal intimacy had been very apparent during my illneſs, and that her miſerable end was no more than a righteous judgment for her infidelity. This news contributed not to the eaſe of my grief; nay, I think, at firſt, it rather encreaſed than mitigated it. A love ſo ill repayed, a friendſhip ſo baſely returned, preyed ſtill more upon my ſpirits, my ſtrength declined, and a long and painful illneſs enſued. For many weeks my recovery remained doubtful; at length, however, I grew more reconciled to my fate,

fate, and time abated the poignancy of my ſorrow. The indications of a decline induced me to come hither; and from your ſociety I have received more conſolation, and more advantages, than from any thing beſide.

"The confidence which this moſt amiable of Men placed in me by his recital, engaged my warmeſt gratitude. Tender and mutually friendly offices on either ſide, ſoon created in us a reciprocal affection. He owned his partiality; I could not, nor did I wiſh to conceal mine. My Father loved us both too well to oppoſe an union on which our happineſs depended. Preparations were made for our wedding. I was introduced, to and kindly received by his Family. The moſt felicitous proſpects opened to our view: Nothing ſeemed to impede our wiſhes. Ah! how vain is the hope of human dependance! — In one fatal moment our long promiſed ſcheme of happineſs was overturned; our hopes periſhed, and we were left to deplore our irremediable misfortunes! — The eve of the day, from whence we thought to date the commencement of our happineſs, and from whence we began the meaſure of our woes, was now arrived. Peace and harmony dwelt in our minds, and mingled in our converſation.

ſation. We were fondly projecting ſchemes of future felicity, thinking ourſelves ſecure of the preſent moment, when our little party was broke up by a meſſage to my deſtined Huſband. He left the room, but on his remaining ſome time abſent, we began to grow uneaſy. On enquiry, we found he had left the houſe, and had repaired to an inn, where he had been directed to go by the Meſſenger, on ſome very important concern. Anxiety took poſſeſſion of me, though I could not imagine any harm could happen, much leſs could I imagine what had really happened. — Ah! how dreadful was the cauſe!

"My Father haſtened to him — Judge what he felt when he beheld his dear intended Son ſenſeleſs, in the arms of people wholly unknown to him. He eagerly flew to him, and as haſtily enquired, what could reduce his Friend to ſuch a ſtate? His attention was called from my beloved *Edmund* to an object of horror, which preſented itſelf to him; a Woman, meanly appareled, and of a moſt ghaſtly countenance, was kneeling at his feet, wringing her hands in the ſtrongeſt agonies imaginable. The dear *Edmund* began to ſhew ſome returning ſenſe. My Father thanked Heaven for his recovery, and, caſting his arms

arms around him, ſought to learn from him the cauſe of this appearance.

"Oh! my Father! my Friend! (exclaimed he, as ſoon as ſpeech was lent him,) lead me, Oh! lead me from this fatal—" He was interrupted by the ſpectre at his feet. "Ah! leave me not (cried ſhe, hardly able to articulate her ſentence for ſobs,) ah! leave me not, till you have pronounced my forgiveneſs; and yet can I hope for it? No; baſe, infamouſly baſe, as I have been, can I dare to expect ſuch godlike mercy?" "Unhappy Woman, (ſaid he,) ſole cauſe of all my woe, thou haſt undone me for ever—Yet, I do pardon thee; but never, never, let me behold thee more." My Father, deſirous of taking him from an object that had wrought in him ſo much diſtreſs, with the aſſiſtance of ſome of the Waiters, got him to our houſe.

"Half dead with terror at their long ſtay, I flew into the room to the two people in the world the deareſt to me. The agony of poor *Edmund*'s mind cannot be expreſſed. Sure never diſtreſs equalled mine! Too ſoon I learnt the fatal truth—this wretched object was his Wife! In order to have an unlimitted intercourſe with her infamous Paramour, they had been ſo atrociouſly wicked as to ſet fire to the houſe.

Regard-

Regardleſs what became of the wretched Huſband, they had the cruelty to leave him to his deſtiny. The Maid-ſervant accompanied them in their flight: They retired to a town in the *Netherlands*, where, for ſome time, they lived as happily as their guilty conſciences could allow. Soon, however, the wretch, for whom ſhe had abandoned her Huſband, became deſirous of returning to *England*, which ſhe oppoſed very much, but, after a ſeries of cruel treatment from him, he privately departed, leaving her totally unprovided with money. She had ſtill, enſlaved by her paſſion for him, followed him, with unwearied aſſiduity, from place to place. At length ſhe found he had croſſed the ſeas to his native country. She had for ſome time ſubſiſted upon charity, and was indebted to the benevolence of ſome people who were coming over, for her paſſage hither.

" She could hear no tidings of her partner in guilt. Reduced to the laſt extremity, ſhe took the reſolution of enquiring after her injured Huſband. She was informed he was going to be married; the news ſtruck to her heart; but when ſhe was likewiſe told of the deep affliction he had undergone for her ſuppoſed death, ſhe was reſolved to riſk every thing, rather than ſuffer him to commit a crime, by marrying

while

while ſhe was living. She travelled to *Briſtol* on foot, and had arrived only a few hours before ſhe ſent to her unhappy Huſband. What words can paint his horror at ſeeing her! Alas, what agonies ſeized him! What did I not ſuffer! His life was deſpaired of many weeks. Almoſt reduced to the ſame deplorable condition, yet I never left him. As ſoon as his health mended, it was neceſſary for us to part. I will not attempt to deſcribe to you the ſcene of our ſeparation; words are too weak to expreſs what ſurpaſſes all conception.

"Life was for many years a burden to me, which I never failed to pray to be relieved from. All ſociety was irkſome. I retired to a ſmall houſe my Father took for me farther in the country, nor for a long time aſſociated with any human creature. How ſtrange it is that I ſhould thus be reduced to the utmoſt deſpair, when there might be a hope of our ſeeing an end to our misfortunes. The life of this wretched woman was very precarious, but I could not look forward to the remoteſt comfort. All before me was a dreary, dark ſcene. Ten years had I dragged through life in this deplorable ſtate, when I received a letter which revived all my hopes, and bade me look up to happineſs. A malignant

fever

ſever had broken the bands of Marriage, and left my ever-dear *Edmund* once more at liberty; his wretched Wife breathed her laſt in his preſence. My *Edmund* intreated to ſee me; he conjured me to haſten to him. Ah! how tender was his dear Epiſtle! how welcome to a heart which had ſuffered too intenſely the ſharp arrow of Adverſity! I haſtily departed; every moment ſeemed an age till I beheld him. Ah! with what eagerneſs did I ruſh to miſery! My *Edmund*, dear and ever beloved, had taken the infectious diſorder from a Wife doomed to be his deſtruction, and had yielded up his ſoul to his Maker the day before I arrived. I ruſhed into the room; I claſped his putrid corpſe in my arms; ah! it was all that was left me of the moſt amiable of men! Fits of the moſt alarming nature ſeized me; Heaven, however, in pity to my venerable Parent, permitted me to live; or, as I for many years thought, as a puniſhment for my reſiſtance to its Divine Will.

" Thus, my dear Lady *Louiſa*, you have before you the Hiſtory of an Old Maid; but whether ſo from fate, or choice, is not determined. I have had offers both before and ſince my misfortunes. Till I knew my ill-fated *Edmund*, I was inſenſible to the paſſion of Love, and all my tender

tender affections were buried in the ſilent tomb with him. How, then, could I beſtow my hand on any one? I looked on myſelf as wedded to his misfortunes, and ſole heir to his griefs."

Here ended, not without many tears ſhed on both ſides, the melancholy detail of poor Mrs. *Middleton*. Ah! I will never deride a Single Woman again. How do I know but keen anguiſh may have rent their hearts! Fell diſappointment may have torn their bloſſoms ere yet matured. But neither is the married life free from diſquitudes. I doubt, then, permanent happineſs is a phantom which is equally courted and equally deceives all mankind. Are we, then, born only to feel the iron hand of Diſtreſs? But I am not qualified for a reaſoner, and ſhall ſoon wade out of my depth.

Indeed, my dear Lady *Cleveland*, I am uneaſy on your account. Don't think me impertinent; but I am ſure you are very many degrees removed from happineſs. That truth I too plainly ſaw while with you; your Letter, however, confirms my fears; you ſeem ſometimes as if you were juſt going to unboſom your griefs, then tear yourſelf away from the ſubject I wiſh you to enlarge upon. Good God! my amiable *Emma* if (you will permit me

to

to call you by that familiar name,) why do I ſee you unhappy? What were the circumſtances of that day on which you wrote to me, the return of which, never fails to make you more than ordinarily melancholy? Though I have been an inmate in your houſe for four months, and am likewiſe related to your Lord, I am as totally a ſtranger to your ſtory as if I had never ſeen you. Pardon me, my deareſt Friend, for the liberties I take. If it can give the ſmalleſt relief to your heart to lay before me any of its anxieties, believe me faithful to your intereſts; my boſom ſhall be the ſacred repoſitory of your ſecrets: But do not ſuffer my wiſhes to influence you. Bid me not aſk, and the finger of Silence ſhall ſeal my lips.

Adieu! my ever dear and amiable Friend,

LOUISA STRETTON.

LETTER IV.

To Lady LOUISA STRETTON.

MY deareſt *Louiſa*, I ſhed floods of tears over your Letter; both, I own, on Mrs. *Middleton*'s account, and that of your Friend, your *Emma*. But pardon me, my

my Love; another time, perhaps, but now I cannot relate to you what has cauſed the boſom of the hapleſs Writer of this, to heave with the ſighs of anguiſh. Even at the requeſt of my *Louiſa*, I cannot, I dare not tear open thoſe wounds which are not yet healed—The repetition would harrow up my moſt tender feelings, and awaken ſenſations that would deprive me of my peace for ever. Ah! then, urge me not, I beſeech you—Suſpend your opinion of me, if poſſible—Do not think hardly of me—Too much have I ſuffered—And do I not ſtill ſuffer, from the idea of being hardly thought of, though undeſervedly?—All this is an ænigma, not yet to be revealed. Believe me, I would, if poſſible, lay before you every action, every anxiety of my heart; but I cannot bear to render myſelf unworthy of your friendſhip, your eſteem; which I certainly ſhould do, as the relating paſt events would revive in my ſoul ſentiments, which inexorable Fate has long ſince conſigned to oblivion, and which I ſhould be now criminal to indulge. I hope, my Dear, you will be ſatisfied with my reaſons; circumſtanced as I am, I cannot act otherwiſe.

I am amazed you have had no intelligence yet of Lord *Stretton*; I likewiſe wonder he has not endeavoured to draw you into a correſpondence. Were I in his ſituation, I

think

think I ſhould have contrived ſome method of that ſort; but he knows beſt.

Will you excuſe this very ſhort Epiſtle? I know you will, for one reaſon of it,—my poor little Girl is much indiſpoſed—I am extremely uneaſy on her account; I hope, however, the fears of a tender Mother exaggerate the danger. Adieu, my dear *Louiſa*. Pardon the inconſiſtencies of your Friend,

EMMA CLEVELAND.

LETTER V.

To Lady CLEVELAND.

I HAVE met with an adventure, occaſioned by an accident, of which I mean to make my dear *Emma* acquainted. But firſt let me enquire after my ſweet little Play-fellow; I long much to know how ſhe is; and that I may have the earlier intelligence, I ſhall ſend this off expreſs to *Cleveland-Place*. Now for the adventure.

Yeſterday, accompanied by Mrs. *Middleton*, I rambled into the *Park*. In deep converſation we had roved a conſiderable way, and had juſt got beyond the limits of my—or rather Lord *Stretton*'s domains, when our ears were ſaluted by a great outcry, and we ſaw a poſt-chaiſe juſt overturned,

turned, and broke almoſt to-pieces. Fortunately *Thomas* was with us; he flew to the aſſiſtance of the diſtreſſed Travellers. Nay, we all flew to give what help was in our power. In the cruſhed vehicle were two Gentlemen, one of whom received very little hurt, but the other ſoon found he had broken one of his legs. I was almoſt terrified to death; but Mrs. *Middleton*, who is poſſeſſed of great preſence of mind, was the only perſon of uſe upon the occaſion. She ordered *Thomas* to take a gate off the hinges, and, by ſtripping the men of their coats made a ſort of bed to convey the unfortunate Stranger to the houſe.

The Gentleman who was leaſt hurt, ſeemed moſt frighted; by which remark I do not mean to inſinuate the ſmalleſt degree of cowardice or weakneſs in him; I mean his apprehenſions for his Companion; who, however, bore his accident with the greateſt fortitude imaginable.

We helped to make the cavalcade to my houſe, where the wounded Man was put immediately to-bed. He made a thouſand apologies for the trouble he was giving; but the anxiety of his Friend was too great to allow him to be ſo ceremonious. I bid him not ſay a word about ſo trifling an affair as the aſſiſtance we were ſo happy to afford him, as I ſhould think him very inhuman if he

would not have beſtowed the ſame on me, in the ſame exigencies.—He paid me a polite compliment, and we left them, to ſend a Meſſenger in all haſte for a Surgeon.

By the appearance they make, and by their deportment, I am ſure they muſt be Gentlemen. I hope they will let me know ſomething about them; they have a Servant, who is a *Swiſs*. Our poor Patient is extremely genteel, and what ſome people would ſtile handſome—But his Companion —I think I never beheld ſo engaging a figure. There is a ſolemnity in his manner to me very touching. Their names, I find, are *Neville* and *Conway:* The firſt is the unfortunate Hero of the piece. Mr. *Denton*, the Surgeon, ſays, the fracture is of the moſt favourable kind; they have nothing to dread but a fever, of which they muſt be cautious. I have deputed *Charlton* head Nurſe — I know her to be very careful. I don't know whether I ſhould ſtile her head Nurſe neither, for Mr. *Conway* ſeems to take that taſk upon himſelf; he has hardly left his Friend, except to dine with us this day. If I gain any intelligence who or what my Gueſts are, I will not fail to inform you of it. Mean time, forgive the inquiſitiveneſs of my laſt, which ſhall never again ſeek to revive in you ideas you wiſh forgotten. Yours faithfully,

LOUISA STRETTON.

LETTER VI.

To Sir CHARLES BEVILL, *at Paris.*

AN accident, my dear *Bevill*, has done that for your Friend, which all the boaſted wiſdom of human nature could not have atchieved in a better manner; ſome few exceptions, however, are to be made, as you ſhall hear anon.

You remember the converſation I held with you at *Paris*. My ſentiments you treated as *outrè*—and you joined with *Edward* to diſſuade me from a ſcheme on which I aſſured you my whole happineſs depended, but which you both thought too romantic ever to ſucceed.

You could not, however, ſee my ſituation in the light I did. I certainly have more refinement than you, aye, and delicacy too—But I did not expect leſs in *Conway* than in myſelf. I agree with you, that I am not a whit happier for the fineneſs of my feelings; but thrown out of the *common* track of life as I am, were I to act in the *common* way I muſt undoubtedly be wretched.

Can it be called a very reaſonable wiſh for a Man to form, to deſire to be acquainted with what kind of Partner he is

to paſs his life? faith, I think not—Now that is a knowledge which I could never gain by being introduced into the preſence of Lady *Louiſa Stretton*, as the Man deſtined to be her Huſband. The awkwardneſs and embarraſſment of my ſituation would throw a reſerve over her actions, and perhaps I ſhould be the only perſon in the world who would be the greateſt ſtranger to her real ſentiments: For theſe reaſons, then, I wiſhed, by ſome method, to get into her company, without her being apprized of my return to *England*. I fell upon various ſchemes; ſome, which I thought tolerably feaſible, you abſolutely overthrew: Others, on mature conſideration, I myſelf rejected. *Conway* would not unite with me in one I had planned, and thought the moſt likely to ſucceed of any. My laſt reſolution ended thus: To go down to my old Friend, Lord *Belford*, and finally to abide by his advice and counſel. Accordingly I ſat off with my Friend *Conway*, who, by the way, has again fallen into the ſame dejection of ſpirits we began to think he had overcome—But more of that another time. I thought it adviſeable, in caſe of accidents, which ſometimes attend the Great, to leave Lord *Stretton* at *Dover*, and only bring the name of *Neville* with me. *St. Pierre* had

had a padlock clapped on his lips, by the fears of my eternal diſpleaſure ſhould he diſcover me. Thus ſecured, we ſat off, as I before ſaid. A wild gooſe hunting, you would call it. But proceed we to the ſequel of our expedition, and the commencement of my adventures with the Heroine of *Stretton Caſtle.* As the Devil would have it, or perhaps a more friendly Agent, our chaiſe broke down, and as Nobility muſt always have the precedence, my Worſhip fell firſt, with the whole weight of poor *Conway*, and his misfortunes, upon my left leg, which, like the ſturdy oak, choſe rather to break than bend. I really believe *Conway* would have gladly loſt his life to have ſaved mine from ſuſtaining any injury; but that, as he ſays, would be paying a poor compliment, to part with what he has no uſe for, and is heartily tired of. As for my own particular, I thought myſelf amply repaid when I received aſſiſtance, beſtowed in the moſt polite and humane manner, from ſome Strangers, whom Heaven ſent for that purpoſe — And certainly would have compounded for a much worſe accident, to gain admittance into the houſe of Lady *Louiſa Stretton.* Yes, as ſure as you are alive, I am now propped up in a bed belonging to my intended Wife — And if

her internal merit anſwers the external appearance, I fancy I ſhall have very little to complain of. *Conway* has been teazing me this hour to leave off writing, to conſider how improper and prejudicial it may be to one in my circumſtances.—I find myſelf rather fatigued — You will then excuſe the brevity of this —Conſider, I am tied by the leg, but am as well as can be expected for one in my condition. My accident happened about a fortnight ago. I cannot proceed for the importunities of my Friend.

Adieu, dear *Bevill.*

STRETTON, alias NEVILLE.

LETTER VII.

To Sir CHARLES BEVILL. *Paris.*

I Have been honoured with a viſit from the Lady of the Manſion. Surely Fortune favoured me highly. I find myſelf exceedingly attached to her; but likewiſe find I ſhall be miſerable, if I do not poſſeſs her heart as well as her hand. What do I ſay? Her hand I will never receive, unleſs I am convinced ſhe loves me. I am more delicate than ever, ſince I have ſeen her. *Con-*

way

way wiſhes to have me reveal myſelf to her, but I am determined as yet I will not, ſince fortune has given me the opportunity of concealing from her knowledge who I am. However, what I am determined on in future is ſtill a ſecret to my own heart. Things muſt, for the preſent, take their own courſe. *Edward* has generally ſpent ſome time every day with Lady *Louiſa*, which I have abſolutely forced him to do. With his good-will he would never quit my room. I furniſhed him with a fable to amuſe the Ladies, concerning who we were, *&c.* I have repeatedly aſked his opinion of her: He ſpeaks in her commendation, but yet ſays, he is ſo poor a judge with reſpect to the qualities of women, that he wiſhes to be ſilent. "But (cried I) I want you to develope her heart and ſentiments."—"'Tis impoſſible, (he replied); no one can diſcover the ſecret meanders of a woman's heart. I have been deceived myſelf, and I might deceive you."—He then ſighs, and tears fill his eyes—then adds, "I wiſh to Heaven you would fall on ſome method to diſcover yourſelf—Already you have been here above three weeks—What can you propoſe to yourſelf?"—I have, I doubt, got myſelf into a hobble, but I cannot help it now. I muſt truſt to chance to bring me honourably off.

If I am aſcertained of the poſſeſſion of *Louiſa*'s heart, I ſhall be very happy that her Father has united her fate to mine. And yet — do not, *Bevill*, laugh at me — ſo whimſical, ſo inconſiſtent is the heart of man, and particularly mine, that I know not whether I ſhould be ſatisfied, or not, even with that certainty. I hardly know what I would wiſh. Should I, as I am, touch her heart, and kindle ſoft ſentiments within it— Should this ſuggeſtion ariſe, that ſhe ought not to ſuffer the paſſion of Love to enter her boſom for any but Lord *Stretton*—I doubt I could not bear to be a rival to myſelf. I know you will blame me, I do myſelf, but I cannot conquer prejudices. I admire her Converſation—Her Perſon is as handſome as I wiſh it to be—Her Servants, in particular her Houſekeeper, who has been the Superintendant of my Chamber, ſpeak of her with the higheſt reſpect, and relate inſtances of her goodneſs, which, though it increaſes my admiration, increaſes my apprehenſions likewiſe.

I aſked Mrs. *Charleton*, the other day, "how it happened, that with her Lady's perſon, fortune, and accompliſhments, ſhe was not yet diſpoſed of in marriage?" She anſwered, "No doubt her Ladyſhip might have married, but that ſhe was under engagements to a Gentleman abroad."—

"May

"May I preſume to aſk who that happy man is?"—"He is a relation of my Lady's, (ſhe anſwered,) to whom ſhe is bequeathed, as I may ſay, by the Will of my late Lord."—"Perhaps, then, the heart of the young Lady is not in the match?"—"Indeed, Sir, I do not know."—"You are diſcreet, I ſee, Mrs. *Charleton*."—"My Lady, Sir, never has made me the *Confidante* of her ſecrets, and if ſhe had, I am ſure you are too much of the Gentleman to wiſh I ſhould betray them."—"I am charmed with you prudence: But it is not from idle curioſity I ventured to aſk you. I am intereſted in it. My gratitude for the civilities I have received, and the manner of them, have attached me extremely to your Lady. Her perſon has created in me ſentiments, to which I was a ſtranger when I entered this houſe. You ſay ſhe is bequeathed, by the Will of her Father, to this Relation—Cannot ſhe then reject him if her heart diſapproves, or if ſome other ſhould gain her affections?"—"She would loſe the principal part of her fortune ſhould ſhe not comply with the Will." "So then, this Relation is likely to be very happy with a Wife, who muſt accept him, or be a beggar. What kind of a man is he?"—"I never ſaw him. He has ſpent moſt part of his life abroad. My old Lord *Stretton* was a

very proud man, and could not bear to have the title unſupported: A union he thought between the preſent Lord and his Daughter would anſwer that purpoſe, therefore left her her fortune on this condition; if ſhe refuſes him the eſtate goes unconditionally to him."—"Is not this circumſtance a great mortification to Lady *Louiſa?*"—"As I ſaid before, Sir, I am not in my Lady's confidence. I doubt not ſhe will act with propriety in this caſe, as in all others, and Heaven ſend her happy!"

Is not this a mark of her prudence? Too many, in her ſituation, would lay open their hearts, that their Servants might read its ſentiments. I hope, however, ſhe has ſome Friend, to whom ſhe communicates all the ſoft effuſions of her ſoul. I ſhould have no opinion of her, ſhould I find her boſom locked up with cold ſuſpicion, and hoarding all its griefs and joys within its own confines. Friendſhip opens and expands the heart. A ſincere and worthy Friend is in the place of a ſecond conſcience. There is a Lady here, who perhaps poſſeſſes all the ſecrets of this prudent girl. I ought to think myſelf happy that ſhe has choſen ſuch a companion. She is a perſon in years, and has met with ſome heavy misfortunes. *Louiſa*'s attachment to her, and the defe-

rence

rence ſhe pays her, makes her character more eſtimable in my eyes.

I wiſh I could anticipate time, and bring things to a concluſion. I beg you, my dear *Bevill*, to forward to me thoſe papers which, by the careleſſneſs of *St. Pierre*, were left at my lodgings in *Paris:* I want to have them much. I will take ſome opportunity of delivering them into the hands of Lady *Louiſa*. I doubt ſhe has but a ſad opinion of me; that is, not of this me, as *Soſia* ſays, but of t'other me, whom ſhe thinks ſtill abroad. Here her Father has been dead almoſt ſix months, and ſhe has received no news from this haughty fellow, who is deſtined to be the maker of her fate. This is all againſt me.

You know me well enough to be convinced, that her fortune will not bias me; and I ſhall make no ſcruple of ſetting my Uncle's Will aſide without the help of the Chancellor; a good fire will do that at any time. I look on myſelf as bound by the ſtricteſt ties to marry her: But if there is any conſtraint on her part, I am undone for ever.

You will hardly find out what I would be at; and truly I am as much at a loſs myſelf. I am conſiſtent in nothing but my attachment to you, to whom I muſt ever be the faithful

STRETTON.

LETTER VIII.

To Lady CLEVELAND.

I Don't know that I have it in my power to tell you much more concerning my gueſts than when I wrote laſt. I have only once been in company with the ſick man, which was this day; the other I have ſeen every day, but can learn but little from him; he ſeems Taciturnity itſelf; yet has his ſilence ſomething more prevalent in it than the oratory of many men would have. Mr. *Neville*, I find, is going to take the poſſeſſion of an eſtate left him by a diſtant Relation; they lately came from *Paris*; I wiſhed to aſk if they were acquainted with Lord *Stretton*. Is it not ſurpriſing, this conduct of his? What ſtrange neglect! Surely I am not worth his ſmalleſt conſideration. He knows beggary muſt be my portion ſhould I refuſe him; but let me tell him, he knows me not, if he thinks I can tamely put up with inſult; beggary would be an enviable ſtate to that, or even, I think, to what I feel at this moment.

I thank you, my dear Lady *Cleveland*, for the relief you gave my heart concerning my little *Harriet*. Sweet Girl, how much I love her!

I find Mr. *Neville* has been making ſome enquiries about me, of *Charleton*; I wonder much

much what ſhould induce him. *Charleton* begged my pardon for mentioning my Engagement to Lord *Stretton*; they certainly do not know that formidable man; his idea haunts me for ever; I dread every hour that goes by, that brings the time nearer when I expect to ſee him. I wonder what kind of a man he is, whether he is like either of theſe men; not that I think there is any compariſon between them. But why do I talk of comparing men? What have I to do with any man, him excepted to whom my hand is devoted? and he is perhaps the only man who would treat me with indifference and neglect. Well, be it ſo; I have no remedy; I am his ſole property, and muſt bear with every thing he pleaſes to inflict. I am peeviſh, my dear *Emma*, beyond expreſſion. Hang the man! would to Heaven I could drive him out of my head! But I will teaze you no longer. Adieu.

LOUISA STRETTON.

LETTER IX.

To Lord STRETTON.

WHAT, in the name of every thing reaſonable, are you about, *Stretton?* You will refine and ſpin away your happineſs,

happineſs, take my word for it. The maddeſt ſcheme, ſure, that ever mad-headed Peer engaged in! What the Devil do you propoſe to yourſelf, to be ſo long in the houſe of your Miſtreſs thus in diſguiſe? Can any good come of it? Believe me, I fear not. *Conway* would have acted with three times your prudence. Whatever you may think of your lucky accident, and ſuch romantic ſtuff, I ſhall not be ſurprized if you think it, one day or other, the worſt accident in the world. Would to Heaven your crazy machine had laſted to Lord *Belford*'s! he might, by his counſels, have helped out the crazy Maſter.

I ſhall ſend your papers herewith; God knows what you intend doing with them! Your ſublime Ideas have not yet thought fit to communicate their intentions to your Judgment, I ſuppoſe. I wiſh you happineſs, and all ſucceſs in your affairs, but I think you ought to employ ſome one in them who is bleſſed with common-ſenſe, that being an article which, I own, I think your Lordſhip not a little deficient in. You will blame my freedom, perhaps; I cannot help it if I differ from you in this inſtance; but this I know, the world, the world, my dear Friend, will be of my ſide.

Suppoſe now, for argument ſake, that the capricious Deity, who is for ever falling foul

foul on ſome one's property, ſhould inſpire your *Dulcinea* with a *penchant* for *Edward?* No impoſſible ſuppoſition, that. Why the Devil, if ſomebody's bones muſt be broke, in order to get a ſeat in the houſe, why could you not contrive to tumble on him? Then, you know, he would have been tied by the leg, and you would have all thoſe opportunities of ingratiating yourſelf with *la Dame du Place* that he now has, if he avails himſelf of them; but for you to break your limbs, in order to limp into your Miſtreſs's affections, certainly is one of the moſt *outrè* pieces of politics that ever moon-ſtruck Wight attempted to atchieve. I am afraid you will make a *lame* buſineſs of it. *Pardon me for being jocular.*

Adieu, my dear Lord. Let me know how you proceed in your operations. *A-propos*, ſuppoſe I come over and perſonate Lord *Stretton?* You will want him moſt confoundedly by and by, and how the Devil you will come by him I know not, unleſs I help you out. Seriouſly, if I can be of any ſervice, command me, ſince you know I am never happier than when I can oblige my Friends, among whom you have the precedence in the affections of, your devoted

CHARLES BEVILL.

Preſent my tendereſt regards to *Conway.*

LET-

LETTER X.

To Sir CHARLES BEVILL.

OH, *Bevill!* you have opened new veins of torture in my ſoul. I am convinced—I love *Louiſa*,—and as truly, as ſurely, ſhe loves *Conway*. What then is left for me? Nothing, but to reſign all pretenſions to her fortune, unite their hands, and retire to the boſom of my *Italian* friends. I have not yet ſpoke to *Conway* about it; I only am to blame; his ſoft, his tender manner has ſtole upon her heart, and I have been the cauſe of all.

When you write again, don't be too ſevere upon me; I cannot bear your raillery; I am cut to the ſoul; I cannot write. I have requeſted the favour of her company this afternoon. If I am capable, I will make the important diſcovery on which muſt depend my happineſs or miſery. But why do I admit it as a doubt? I would not accept her hand, though all the riches and honours of the world accompanied it.

If I can recall my ſcattered ſenſes, I will relate to you the ſum of a converſation, that paſſed the other day in my dreſſing-room. I have every day ſince my laſt, been honoured with a viſit from the Ladies; the day

day before yeſterday Lady *Louiſa* ſaid ſhe underſtood we had lately been in *Paris*; and, with ſome heſitation, deſired to know if we had there been acquainted with, or heard of, a Lord *Stretton*. I own I was not prepared for the queſtion; but I took upon me to be Spokeſman, and anſwered her, I had no acquaintance with ſuch a perſon. "That was very odd, (ſhe ſaid;) I ſhould have thought a man of his Lordſhip's quality muſt have been known."—"Is he related to your Ladyſhip?" I aſked. "Yes, (ſhe anſwered,) a diſtant one."—"I think, (ſaid *Conway*,) I have heard of ſuch a Nobleman, and that he was to have taken paſſage for *England* when we did."—"But he did not, Sir?" aſked ſhe eagerly. "No, that he did not," I anſwered in as a great hurry, for fear *Conway* ſhould diſcover more than I wiſhed him. After this, Lady *Louiſa* bore very little ſhare in the converſation for ſome time. I ſmiled, and ſaid, "Your Ladyſhip is very thoughtful; may I be allowed to gueſs your reaſon for being ſo? I fancy Lord *Stretton* is the ſubject of your meditations."—"You are very right, Mr. *Neville*; Lord *Stretton* engages a part of my thoughts, I own."—"He is a happy man, I am ſure."—"That you know, (replied ſhe, ſweetly ſmiling,) depends wholly on the nature of my thoughts. But ſince my thinking

thinking of him made me grave, let us at preſent baniſh him from our converſation, as, I dare ſay, he is not now thinking of me."—"I dare ſay he is, (ſaid I, looking tenderly at her,) I ſhould fancy he can think of nothing elſe; I am ſure he can find no ſubject ſo delightful."—"You are very polite," was her anſwer. Much, you will ſay, could not be gathered from this; you will think, too, I have not cauſe to be jealous of *Conway*. But *hear all, and then let Juſtice hold the ſcale.* I can juſt hobble about in my crutches. This morning I had a mind to walk about the gallery to view the pictures; I was ſtanding, and admiring a very fine piece of *Titian*'s, when I heard the Ladies enter a room near me. Lady *Louiſa* ſaid to Mrs. *Middleton*, her Companion, "Have I not reaſon, my dear Madam, to be diſſatisfied with Lord *Stretton?* Does he uſe me with that politeneſs which might engage a tender return on my ſide? Why does he leave me thus expoſed to dangers?"—"I own, my Dear, (returned Mrs. *Middleton*,) Lord *Stretton* does not act in the moſt tender manner by you; but moſt likely he ſuppoſes you fixed with ſome of your Relations. I ſmile when you ſay you are expoſed to dangers."—"Ah! Mrs. *Middleton*, is it then impoſſible that one's heart may not be in danger?"—"I underſtand

ſtand you, my dear *Louiſa*; he is very amiable."—"Who is amiable, Mrs. *Middleton?*"—"Why, Mr. *Neville*, is he not?"—"Lord! you frighted me to death; I vow, I did not know what you were going to ſay."—"Oh! (ſaid Mrs. *Middleton*, laughing,) then I have found you out: The penſive *Conway* has ſighed himſelf into your favour."—"Would to Heaven! (ſaid *Louiſa*,) Lord *Stretton* was juſt ſuch a man; then I ſhould find no difficulty in fulfilling my Father's Will. But my *penchant* is only tranſient. My duty will always be ſtronger than my inclination."

Here you will allow there is proof enough for a jealous man to build a Caſtle of Torture on. Ah! *Louiſa*, I cannot truſt to duty alone. I ſhall never be happy while my Uncle's Will remains in force; you plainly ſee ſhe is prepoſſeſſed againſt me; and I think I may add, it is as plain ſhe is prejudiced in favour of *Conway*. Well, be it ſo;—It is much better I ſhould know her ſentiments now, than that I ſhould learn them too late. Thus you ſee I do not altogether yet condemn myſelf. Let me ſeek comfort ſomewhere, for Heaven's ſake; if I am wrong,

"The flattering error ceaſe to prove,
Ah! let me be deceiv'd."

I do

I do not think you can be of any ſervice to me here; — I ſhall want your company next winter at *Naples*, as I have a *preſentiment* that I ſhall return thither. Indeed, that will be the moſt prudent ſtep, as my fortune is too ſmall to ſupport my title with any degree of dignity here; while there, I ſhall ſhine with an eclat.

Adieu! my dear *Bevill!* If you knew all I felt, you would not be ſo very ſatyrical on your friend,

STRETTON.

LETTER XI.

To Lady CLEVELAND.

I Have hardly power left to lay before my dear *Emma*, the adventures of this day. Good Heaven! what a ſhock have I received! But let me lead to it with ſome degree of method.

I was paying my daily viſit to the Gentlemen, my gueſts, immediately after dinner. Mr. *Neville* looked more melancholy than I had ever obſerved even Mr. *Conway* to be. After ſome converſation of no conſequence in life, Mr. *Neville* ſaid, "Will you pardon me, Madam, for having deceived you the other day, when I ſaid, I did not know Lord

Lord *Stretton?* Alas! I know him but too well." Judge, my Dear, at my aſtoniſhment. "For God's ſake! Sir, (ſaid I, greatly perturbated,) what is it you mean? Why, if you knew my Lord, ſhould you have denied it? I cannot ſee what purpoſe it can have anſwered."—"Nor I neither, (ſaid he, ſighing.) But before I explain myſelf more fully, let me thus, and thus, deſtroy every veſtige of an authority, unjuſtly given, to one unworthy, as well as unwilling to receive it." While he was ſpeaking, he was tearing in pieces ſeveral papers; "And now, (continued he, with a mournful air) dear and amiable *Louiſa*, you are at liberty to make that election your heart approves of, without any apprehenſions from an unfortunate man, who is ſufficiently wretched in having cauſed you the leaſt uneaſineſs."

I intreated him, with the greateſt earneſtneſs, to ſolve this ſtrange ænigma. I knew not what to think; I was half diſtracted. "Ah! (ſaid he,) is it then neceſſary for me to declare to you, that I am that *Stretton*, whoſe appearance you ſo much dreaded; that man whom your Father, from a too great partiality, gave an unjuſt right over his Child; but who was incapable of reaping ſo baſe an advantage?" Amazement ſealed my lips. I continued ſilent a long

long time. At laſt I ſaid, "Good God! why did not your Lordſhip apprize me before, who you was?"—"Would to Heaven, (cried he,) I could have concealed it now; I have been too precipitate; I intended to have left your houſe before I had diſcovered myſelf; but my impatience to make you free, hurried me on to the diſcloſure I have now made. I wiſhed to reſign all pretenſions to your fortune, ſince your heart alone could make it a deſirable object to me; that heart which is not, cannot be mine. No, Madam, the man who cannot form your happineſs, ſhall never impede it. And witneſs for me Heaven, that while I love with an honeſt and ardent paſſion as ever rendered the human heart wretched, I would not for the univerſe receive your hand." He could not proceed; his voice was choaked with ſighs.

I hardly know what became of myſelf; I trembled like an aſpin-leaf, and ſunk down, juſt fainting, into my chair. Mrs. *Middleton* ſaid ſomething, what I ſcarcely heard. At length, a flood of tears ſeaſonably guſhed from my eyes. "Ah! Madam, (ſaid Lord *Stretton*,) what am I to think of theſe tears? Has my method of rendering you free from the leaſt reſtraint offended you? Behold me, ready to do all in my power to make you happy. No ſacrifice, I have

plainly

plainly proved, is too great for me to offer; and believe me, the only happineſs that now can reſult to me, will be to beſtow your hand on that man who will make you as bleſſed as I ſhall never ceaſe to wiſh you." When I could articulate a ſentence, I ſaid, "I am infinitely obliged to your Lordſhip for the goodneſs of your intentions, but you have failed in the means; I will not force a hand on your acceptance which you have ſo peremptorily rejected; but, let me aſſure you, you know not the value of the heart you have thus given away."—"Ah! Lady *Louiſa*, 'twas from the conviction of that heart not being mine."—"That, my Lord, (ſaid I, riſing,) is a point that muſt be argued hereafter. I am not, at preſent, ſufficiently myſelf to hold a farther converſation. You have taken a moſt extraordinary ſtep, indeed. You muſt give me leave to retire, and endeavour to recover from the greateſt ſhock I ever ſuſtained."

I hurried to my room; tears ſtill continued to relieve me: I ſhut myſelf in; I could not bear the ſight of any one.

Good God! what am I to do! He ſays I am free; no, he has deprived me of that little freedom I flattered myſelf I once had. He has reſigned his fortune to me; can I keep it? Is it not incumbent on me to give it to him again? But he will not accept it.

I ſhall

I ſhall never, never forget theſe words, *I would not, for the univerſe, receive your hand!* Ah! good God! what have I done, what act of imprudence committed, that he is ſo violently bent againſt fulfilling the Will of my Father? Ah! he may pretend, but he cannot know what Love is. Why did he undertake ſo ſtrange, ſo wild a ſcheme? And yet is there not generoſity in it? But would a generous man wound a heart, by heaping ſuch obligations on it? Again, how can he tell I do not prefer him, or at leaſt ſhall not, in time? How can he take upon him to aſſert my heart is not, never can be his? Am I then rejected, ſcorned, by the man who was bound, by the ſtrongeſt ties, to protect me? I thought my Father cruel and unjuſt, is not Lord *Stretton* more ſo? I am totally at a loſs, my dear Lady *Cleveland*, in what manner to act, or to whom to apply to for advice. As you ſay, Lord *Cleveland* would not care for taking the trouble upon himſelf; but what could he do if he was kind enough to undertake my cauſe? He could not oblige Lord *Stretton* to fulfil engagements which were never meant to bind him. He was always free to accept or reject; he has choſen the latter; will not that be ſufficient in the eye of the world, too apt to take things upon truſt, and judge from appearances, to condemn

demn me? Will it not be ſaid, that the rejection was cauſed by ſome imprudence on my ſide? My character will be called in queſtion, and he will be extolled as the moſt generous and noble-minded of men; and the ſagacious multitude will ſhake their heads, and hint, and wink away my reputation.

Lord *Stretton* might entitle himſelf to my warmeſt gratitude; he might, in time, do more; but he has overthrown every thing. He has a mean opinion of me. Good God! what levity has he diſcovered in my behaviour, to juſtify him in the idea of the impoſſibility of my heart ever being his? Does he ſuppoſe I object to him merely becauſe the Will of my Father beſtowed me on him? Is it to be treated thus that I have been ſo cautious, ſo circumſpect in my conduct?—So apprehenſive leſt I ſhould be too ſenſible of the merit of ſome other Man, that I have kept my eyes from wandering, determining in myſelf that my heart ſhould accompany my hand?—Have I not endeavoured to eſteem him during a ſix months neglect? Ah! he may to the world appear generous—to me he is not ſo. At beſt he is a capricious Man, and ſtudies to make himſelf and every one elſe uneaſy. Moſt effectually he has ſuc-

ceeded with me; for I think till now, I never knew what uneaſineſs meant. Adieu.

Moſt truly yours,

LOUISA STRETTON.

LETTER XII.

To Lady CLEVELAND.

WHAT a ſtrange man is this Lord *Stretton!* The agitation of his mind has thrown him into a fever. Mr. *Conway* is almoſt diſtracted. I never ſaw a human Creature more diſtreſſed. What a violent diſpoſition this Couſin of mine has. I know not what to do with him. Do you know, if I ſhould take him at his word, I ſhould not leave him a thouſand a year, that being all he has, except my Father's eſtate? And he gives all this up, rather than marry me. It may be generoſity; but, all things conſidered, it is not prudent in him, nor juſt to me. As I ſaid before, the World will judge, and you may be ſure its cenſures will fall on your Friend. It is plain, Lord *Stretton* is of a very jealous diſpoſition — But of whom can he entertain ſuſpicion? Of Mr. *Conway?* I am ſure I do not know that my eyes ever fixed

fixed on him in Lord *Stretton*'s preſence. I own to you, as I have before, that Mr. *Conway* is the moſt engaging figure I ever beheld; but that is no argument I love him. Heaven forbid I ſhould! But if Lord *Stretton* will never believe he is beloved till he is thought to be handſomer than Mr. *Conway*, I fear he will ever remain in doubt. Are only Beauties to be beloved? If ſo, I have but little chance. He has but a poor opinion of his mental part, if he places his ſole dependance on his outſide. I declare I thought Mr. *Neville* agreeable — But Lord *Stretton* has taken great pains to loſe ground.

But ſtill, though I am angry with him, I pity him, for he is really very ill. Had not that been the caſe, I preſume he would have taken his leave, even if he had been forced to be conveyed in a litter. I have not ſeen him ſince the diſcovery — But have been very punctual in my inquiries after his welfare.

I intend prevailing on Mrs. *Middleton* to talk with him, when he is able to bear converſation. She may, perhaps, induce him to think better of me. He muſt have heard ſomething to my prejudice; though what, as I am totally ignorant of having done any thing to excite the malevolence of the world, I am equally at a loſs to re-

ſute: He ought to let me know what he ſees amiſs in my conduct, or what he may have heard to my diſadvantage.

I do not think it is worth while to ſend this ſcrap of paper, I will, therefore, leave it open — Something may tranſpire by and by.

Mrs. *Middleton* has been admitted to the preſence of Lord *Stretton.* She uſed every argument in nature to prove to him that my heart has ever been free from the ſlighteſt attachment to any Man. She enlarged, with her accuſtomed tenderneſs, on the whole tenor of my conduct; and ſaid ſo many things in my praiſe, as made me bluſh when ſhe repeated them, and which would be utterly impoſſible for me to tell you.

All ſhe could get from him, was the deep ſenſe of his own demerit, and the fatal prejudice, which I muſt neceſſarily have taken againſt a man, who had been made the ſole arbiter of my fortune — He blamed himſelf for ever introducing Mr. *Conway* to my acquaintance; it certainly could not be imputed a fault in me, if I diſcovered thoſe perfections in him, which endeared his character to all that knew him. His only wiſh was now to ſee me happy, which if ſhe (Mrs. *Middleton,*) thought

thought could be effected by an union with Mr. *Conway*, his earneſt endeavours ſhould not be wanting.

Mrs. *Middleton* freely owned ſhe had heard me ſay, I thought Mr. *Conway* the handſomeſt man I had ever ſeen; nay, once ſhe believed I went ſo far as to ſay, I wiſhed Lord *Stretton* juſt ſuch a one; but that was no argument I was in love with him, but rather proved my reſolution of fulfilling my engagements with his Lordſhip at all hazards.

A common mind, (he ſaid,) might be content with thoſe aſſurances, and the good opinion which I deſerved; but unfortunately he had too nice a way of thinking; he wiſhed to poſſeſs my heart free and entire. — "And I will venture to aſſure your Lordſhip, (interrupted Mrs. *Middleton*,) that no man, beſides yourſelf, ever will. She will always think herſelf bound to be your Wife, and therefore will never permit her heart to feel an improper partiality for any other. I doubt, my Lord, you are one of thoſe who refine too much, to taſte that portion of felicity which this world affords us; which is certainly wrong, as it affects ourſelves only, but it is ungrateful to that Providence which deals out thoſe bleſſings to us, with a ſcanty hand, perhaps, as we may think, and imperfect; but be-

cauſe it is not given to us to be as happy as Angels, we are not to reject what will place us in the claſs of happy Mortals." This, and a great deal more, ſhe urged, for a long time, in vain; at laſt he ſaid, he would not have me look on myſelf as bound to him, ſince he had releaſed me from every engagement; it was unjuſt in my Father to deprive me of the natural right of choice; that, as for him, he would bind himſelf to marry no other woman; and that, ſhould I hereafter feel for him thoſe ſentiments he ſhould be happy to inſpire, it would be the higheſt felicity to him to be aſſured of it; but that he would reſtore to me that free agency I ought to poſſeſs; and I did not do him juſtice, if I thought he meant to lay an undue claim to my gratitude, by deſtroying thoſe Papers; he had no ſiniſter view in his proceedings; it had ever been his fixed determination not to keep them, but he had been precipitated into an unpolite manner of acting: He intreated her to obtain my pardon for the uneaſineſs he had given me, which he never meant to do: He likewiſe ſaid, he loved Mr. *Conway* ſo much, that he could not feel any reſentment againſt him; he ſhould highly condemn himſelf if he were capable of diſliking any perſon I ſhould honour with my affection.

Mrs.

Mrs. *Middleton* aſſured him he laboured under an error. No allegation of my being attached to Mr. *Conway* could be charged, any more than my ſaying, I thought him handſome and amiable. His Lordſhip was a man of too good ſenſe, to admit the impoſſibility of a man not being beloved, becauſe we ſee, or have owned we have ſeen, a handſomer man. But, (continued ſhe,) I will leave you to your reflections, my Lord; and when you conſider how hardly the world will judge of Lady *Louiſa* on your account, I think you will be ſorry for having, nearly, left her to its cenſures.

This afternoon a moſt reſpectful Meſſage was brought me from Lord *Stretton*, to requeſt my company; I was determined he ſhould not have my negligence to complain of, ſo returned an Anſwer in the ſame terms. I approached the door, which was a-jar; I puſhed it gently open, and juſt heard Mr. *Conway* ſay, "There is nothing, my deareſt Lord, I would not do to give you pleaſure; with joy would I lay down my life for you, but that, as I have often ſaid, is of no eſtimation with me; embitter it not ſtill more, by further urging the requeſt you have made. I never, never can comply, even if it was as you have ſaid.

No, every ſentiment of paſſion is totally extinct, all my ſtock of love exhauſted on an Ingrate, whoſe perfidy has rendered my exiſtence a curſe."—He ſeemed unable to proceed, from the agitation of his heart. I would not give Lord *Stretton* time to reply, but made ſome little noiſe at the door, to apprize him of my entrance.

A few days illneſs has altered him exceedingly. Upon my word, my heart ſmote me, when I ſaw the ravages it had made in his countenance; yet is it not all owing to his caprice?

I hardly know how matters are ſettled between us; there were ſome tears ſhed on all ſides. My ſpirits were very low on the occaſion. I begged him to do all in his power to recover his health; I believe he promiſed he would. As I ſay, I ſcarcely know to what determination we are come, but I hope I made him ſenſible that I would never conſent my Father's Will ſhould be ſo much oppoſed, as to permit the Eſtate to go from the Title. If, on a third offer of myſelf, I am again rejected, my plan is fixed, to enter into a compromiſe with him: I will take the perſonal part, and leave the real eſtate for him; I ſhall then have about thirty thouſand pounds, and he will have twelve thouſand a year.

My

My curioſity, I doubt, is an illaudable one, but I long to know who this Ingrate is, that has made this poor fellow's life a curſe. Perhaps too I wiſh the more, becauſe it is likely I never ſhall, for I cannot tell him I overheard this converſation. I think it is plain Lord *Stretton* had been endeavouring to perſuade him to make me an offer, on the ſuppoſition of my entertaining a partiality for him; I am better pleaſed, however, that his refuſal proceeded not from an avowed diſlike to me, but more from the impoſſibility of his ever loving any other than her who has wrought him ſuch diſtreſs. But, on examination, is not that being more pleaſed at having a negative compliment, than I ought to be? I do not then feel for his misfortunes as Chriſtian Charity demands. Well, well, we muſt ſettle that point another time.

I am, my dear Lady *Cleveland*, eternally yours,

LOUISA STRETTON.

LETTER XIII.

To Lady LOUISA STRETTON.

YOUR accounts have amazed me very much; I really think Lord *Stretton*, though he has acted rather in a romantic

manner, is ſtill much to be pitied. His part, as well as my dear *Louiſa*'s, is a delicate one. Conſider well of it; he had an unlimited power over your Perſon and Fortune. Can you blame him for wiſhing to obtain your heart? Ah! what intercourſe is pleaſing without the heart bearing a ſhare in it? He ſcorns, you ſee, to avail himſelf of the authority given him. He has made you your own Miſtreſs; yet neither would I, nor, by his proceedings, would he, have you ſacrifice your Happineſs to your Gratitude. Be certain, my Love, that you have no latent partiality for this man, whom you ſtile ſo amiable, and whom you ſee unfortunate. Ah! ſpare yourſelf; ſpare the generous *Stretton* the anguiſh which muſt mutually ſeize you, when too late, if you ſuffer your own opinion of Rectitude to urge you to the acceptance of his Hand, while the fate of your Heart is undetermined. You might think to conceal the fatal attachment in your own breaſt; from common eyes you might, but Lord *Stretton*'s would pierce through the folds of your heart; and the diſcovery that all he poſſeſſes is Gratitude and Duty, will plant endleſs torments in his boſom; you will both be wretched. Take time, therefore, my Dear, ere your laſt determination is made. I wiſh you happy; would

to

to Heaven I could point out to you the means! I am ſorry to ſay, Lord *Cleveland* leaves you ſolely to your own guidance. I do not ſpeak this as thinking his interpoſition neceſſary, or that it would be uſeful, but his indifference pains me. Ah! why does he ſtrive to place his character in a worſe point of view than I wiſh to ſee it! Surely it is highly impolitic in him. But I am exceeding the bounds I have preſcribed myſelf. Adieu.

Yours faithfully,

EMMA CLEVELAND.

LETTER XIV.

To Lady CLEVELAND.

A Letter, which Lord *Stretton* has received from abroad, ſeems to have ſettled our matters more than any thing beſides. He has almoſt got the better of his indiſpoſition; and as his ſpirits are mended, I find him more agreeable than I at firſt thought him. Heaven knows how it will end! In a Marriage, I ſuppoſe, as uſual.

You muſt give me leave to talk, or, to expreſs myſelf with more preciſion, to write a little about Mr. *Conway*. Good God!

what muſt that woman be who could uſe *him* ill? So amiable, ſo gentle, ſo worthy of being beloved!—Let me ſay this to you—you know Lord *Stretton* will never ſee what I write.

This morning Lord *Stretton* took up a *Spectator*, and opened it at that Paper, where a Letter is written by a Man, who dreamed his Miſtreſs had a window in her breaſt. We all agreed how many heart-achs we might eſcape, were it common to be ſo furniſhed. A great many ſenſible and pretty things were ſaid on the occaſion by my Lord. I ſaid, "I thought ſuch a circumſtance would deſtroy that pleaſure we feel in relying on thoſe we love; ſince there would be no need of placing a confidence." Mr. *Conway* took it up: "And is it not better to loſe that pleaſure, which is at beſt but a ſhadow, than to experience the real ill by being cruelly deceived?"—"You are a prejudiced man, (ſaid I, ſmiling;) you have an ill opinion, I find, of the Sex, and are an enemy to the Paſſion."—"Am I an enemy to the Paſſion? Have I not reaſon? I have been an Enthuſiaſt, and, like other Enthuſiaſts, have fallen a Martyr to the Cauſe. Oh! Lady *Louiſa!* you know not what I have ſuffered. If to determine never again to be the Slave of capricious Love be to be an Enemy, I am one;

one; an open, an avowed one—As ſuch I will live, as ſuch I will die. Good God! is it then nothing to be deluded with hopes, cheated with expectations, ſoothed by artful flattery, enchained by falſe aſſurances, lulled by ſoft endearments, and then daſhed in one inſtant from all my gay proſpects? Pardon me, Madam, but I muſt complain of your Sex. Let thoſe be loud in their praiſe, let them ſound their panegyric, who have received bleſſings from them; but let me ſtill complain, ſtill call them falſe, cruel, and ungrateful; at leaſt I have found them ſo. And yet I cannot tear her from my heart. Still does her image ſwim before my ſight. I ſee her, as I once fondly thought her, all fair without, an Angel all within. Why does not my imagination preſent her to me as ſhe really is? Why do I not ſee the hateful vices which are before concealed? Why do I not behold her in the act of ſacrificing every holy vow, every tender tie, at the Altar of Ambition? The Poet has in one line given her character,

"She'd wed a coffin, were the hinges gold."

"Ah! how happy I once was! How many months of tender confidence I paſſed with her! Oh! and is all forgot? Like our firſt Parent, I left her but for one ſhort hour,

hour, and in that hour I loſt her. An inſidious enemy, lurking for my ruin, attacked her; the heart which I thought filled alone with Love, was not proof againſt a Title. She ſacrificed the moſt tender, the moſt faithful of men to Ambition."

He ſeemed ſo much affected, that he ſcarcely knew any one was in the room. His rhapſody affected me. I again repeat, What muſt that woman be? Surely there are not many ſuch. How ſhould I contemn, how deſpiſe her. What baſeneſs to deſert ſo amiable a man! Can her breaſt ever know the ſoft calm of content? Can her nightly ſlumbers be undiſturbed? Ah! no; ſurely her imagination muſt hourly preſent him to her, loudly proclaiming his wrongs.

Adieu, my deareſt Lady *Cleveland*; I have dwelt on the wrongs of poor *Conway* ſo much, and my indignation againſt his falſe one is ſo keen, that I can write on no other ſubject at preſent.

Yours faithfully,

LOUISA STRETTON.

LETTER XV.

To Lady CLEVELAND.

GOOD God of Heaven! I had rather have parted with every ſhilling I am worth in the world, have been reduced to abject ſlavery, and lived on ſordid ſcraps from rich mens doors, than have known what I now know. Is it poſſible? How much have I been deceived! Oh! Lady *Cleveland*, I little thought, when I laſt wrote — Poor *Conway!* no wonder thou wert deceived, blinded by the Paſſion of Love, when the cool eye of Friendſhip could not diſcover a fault.

Would to Heaven this incident had not happened; that I had ſtill remained in ignorance—But ſo it was. Lord *Stretton*, this morning, as he and I were talking at the window—Lord *Stretton*, I ſay, (I hardly know what I write,) was mentioning ſomething of the attachment he thought I had for *Conway:* "You own, (ſaid he,) you think him very handſome, and beauty is very engaging."—"Why, (ſaid I, laughing,) I'll ſhew you a picture, which I expect you will think much handſomer than I am, but I ſhall not be jealous if you ſay ſo." On which I took your Ladyſhip's Picture

out

out of my pocket. I put it into his hand. He looked on it, ſaying, "Good God! this is an Angel, ſure! Why here is Beauty enough to make even Folly pleaſing."—"And I aſſure you, my Lord, there is in the Original, Senſe and Goodneſs enough to make Beauty needleſs."—"Then ſhe is a treaſure, indeed," replied he; and calling to *Conway*, "Come hither, *Edward*, and ſee if this Picture does not ſurpaſs all that *youthful Poets fancy when they love.*" The inſtant the unfortunate *Conway* fixed his eyes upon it, a deathlike paleneſs ſeized him, his lips trembled, and with the utmoſt difficulty he pronounced, "Ah! what magic is this? Why is this fatal reſemblance conjured up to rip open my ſtill bleeding wounds? Ah! falſe, faithleſs *Emma!* why haſt thou the power ſtill to tear my breaſt with never-dying anguiſh?" Ah! Lady *Cleveland*, think what became of me! Is it you, then, who have planted ſtings in the breaſt of the ill-fated *Edward?* Is it the Friend of my boſom who has done all this? I have not had a dry eye ſince. No one can tell what I feel. Excuſe me; no wonder you are not happy; no wonder you ſo carefully concealed your griefs; you knew too well, that the revealing them muſt lay you open to cenſure.

I find

I find this unhappy young man has encountered many evils. His real name, I need not tell you, is not *Conway*, but *Courtenay*. I hardly know what I have written, I have been under ſuch agitation of ſpirits. Perhaps I have taken undue liberties; if ſo, I entreat your pardon. I doubt you have been ſufficiently puniſhed for your infidelity. Again I beg you to forgive me. Dear Lady *Cleveland*, if you can juſtify yourſelf, do ſo immediately; as no tongue can tell what I feel, while I think you not ſo deſerving as I uſed to do of the love of all the world, and more particularly of

LOUISA STRETTON.

LETTER XVI.

To Lady LOUISA STRETTON.

YES, my *Louiſa*, (if yet the moſt wretched and forlorn of human beings may ſtill preſume to addreſs you with that once allowed familiarity,) yes, I will a tale unfold which ſhall freeze thy blood.

Ah! good God! are not the ſevereſt ills that mortal can endure enough, but that the hand of Friendſhip ſhould be armed againſt my peace, and tear open afreſh my rankling wounds? But I ſubmit. Cruſh me

me with thy cruel upbraidings. Ah! that each word had been a dagger transfixed in my wretched boſom!

Is it *I* who ſacrificed the moſt tender and faithful of men at the Altar of Ambition?—Ah! I did more, I ſacrificed my own Peace of Mind.

My tears, the Tears of Anguiſh, not of Contrition or Guilt, will not at preſent allow me to proceed.

Yet why do I attempt to juſtify myſelf? Ah! is it not better the ill-fated *Courtenay* ſhould think I deſerve the epithets of falſe, cruel, and ungrateful? Ah! for his Peace of Mind it is better he ſhould. Tell him, then, my *Louiſa*, that I am unworthy his leaſt regard; that he ought to tear my image from his breaſt—Tell him—Ah! I know not what—But do not tell him of my diſtreſs. Conceal from him every circumſtance I am going to relate to you. Yet, can I bear the thought?—Have I vices concealed by art? *Louiſa!* I am diſtracted—I cannot ſupport the idea of being deſpiſed by *Edward*. Fatal Picture! why did I ever give it you? If I can compoſe my mind, I will inform you of every particular of my unfortunate Hiſtory; at preſent the agony of it is not to be expreſſed. Oh! my God! that it were not impious,

impious, how freely would I lay down my life this moment.—I would but wiſh to juſtify myſelf to the only perſon in the world—What am I ſaying?—Bid him forget me. I cannot now think of *him* without a crime.

Yet, my *Louiſa*, do not, unheard, condemn me. Suſpend your belief till you have all the ſad account before you; then judge for yourſelf. I find myſelf too much diſordered to attempt, at preſent, my ſtory of woe. Another time you ſhall have it.

Adieu! deareſt of Friends, adieu!

EMMA CLEVELAND.

LETTER XVII.

To Lady LOUISA STRETTON.

THE agitation of my ſpirits cannot be expreſſed. My enfeebled body nearly ſunk under it; I have been extremely ill. I do not mention it to excite your compaſſion; if my hapleſs Story has not that effect, all things elſe muſt fail. You have ſaid, though I was married to a Relation of yours, yet you were ignorant of my family and connections; I muſt, therefore,

fore, give you the particulars far back. I then lay before you,

The HISTORY *of* EMMA WOODVILLE.

THAT no partiality may blind the peruſers of this, I will lay before them, without any Preface, the events which compoſe my Story. The years of my childhood I will paſs over, till I arrived at the age of Seventeen; it was then all the moſt affecting ſcenes of my life commenced. The circumſtances of one day tinctured all my future ones.

A young Lady of our neighbourhood and myſelf were one day taking a ride on horſeback, attended only by a Servant. On our return, my horſe ſeemed inclined to drink; it was what I had often permitted him to do; but whether the warmth of the weather induced him, or from what cauſe I know not, as ſoon as ever he got into the pond, without the leaſt warning, he laid down. He was on the point of rolling, which terrified me ſo much, that I was ready to faint. At that inſtant a young Gentleman, who ſaw the accident, ſprung from a phaëton, and plunged into the water to my relief; he brought me in his arms to the ſhore. I ſuſtained no other damage than fright, and wet petticoats. He, with great politeneſs, inſiſted on having the

the honour of driving me home, which, fortunately, was not far off. My gratitude was conformable to the ſervice I had received. My Father was from home, but my Mother welcomed the Stranger, and intreated he would ſtay to ſatisfy himſelf I had recovered after a little reſt. I was put to bed, and took ſome weak whey, in order to prevent any ill conſequences; however, towards evening I came down, and had it in my power to thank my brave deliverer. I had then an opportunity of obſerving his figure, which before I was too much agitated to do. His perſon was ſuch as the moſt lively imagination can hardly form; ſuch animation ſparkling in his eyes, the full blown roſes on his cheeks, his noble air; — Ah! could they fail to make an impreſſion on my young heart, naturally tender, and of a romantic caſt! Such was the charming *Edward Courtenay*, when I firſt beheld him. Yes, *Louiſa*, it was he, who now ſtiles me cruel and ungrateful. Ah! why did he preſerve a life doomed to make him wretched? But if I ſuffer myſelf to fall into tender expoſtulations, I ſhall never be able to proceed.

After tea, Mr. *Courtenay* took his leave; not, however, till he had obtained permiſſion of my Mother to call once more to know how I did. When he was gone, my Mother

ſeemed

ſeemed never tired of reciting his praiſe. Her tenderneſs for me made her grateful to him. But why do I ſeek to rob him of his due; can any praiſe be too much?

I thought the time long till I again ſaw my Hero; a title, which my companion, Miſs *Flemming*, uſed to give him, when he was the ſubject of our converſation; a ſubject which, indeed, made the whole of our converſation. Again I had the pleaſure of his company; his agreeable manner ſtill won more and more on my eſteem. As I ſaid, I was of a romantic caſt; my ſpirits were timid and tender; I was not of a conſtitution to engage in any violent exerciſes; my turn of mind rather led me to calm ſociety, or books; I had imbibed a great deal of ſenſibility from my choice of reading; all this concurred to make me ſee this action of Mr. *Courtenay* in the ſtrongeſt light. I thought I owed him every thing; and as I thought my heart the beſt recompence I could beſtow, gratitude would not permit me to with-hold it.

His family was equal to ours, his fortune likewiſe ſuitable. Every thing might have concurred to make us happy; ah! every thing conſpired to make us wretched! The Mother of Mr. *Courtenay* had, by a ſecond marriage, become our neighbour; that is, ſhe lived within ten miles of us; which,

which, in the country, you know, we reckon as nothing. The young Gentleman was paying her a viſit from *Oxford*, where he was a Student.

He continued to call upon us now and then. After my Father was returned with my Siſter, who had been for ſome months with an Aunt of ours in *Derbyſhire*, our family conſiſted of my Father and Mother, one Brother, a Siſter two years older than myſelf, and another five years younger.

Miſs *Flemming* one day invited me to ſee her, where I found ſeveral of my friends and acquaintance, among whom was Mr. *Courtenay*. I received great pleaſure in his company, the more ſo as it was unexpected. Miſs *Flemming* would not apprize me of her intentions, becauſe ſhe would enjoy a little embarraſſment, which his preſence always excited.

A Gentleman, after dinner, was ſpeaking of the difficulty of obtaining an opportunity, which he had long wanted, to diſcloſe an attachment to a particular Lady. He could not, he ſaid, aſſume courage to tell her, what an effect her charms had upon him, and he wiſhed to do it by letter.

Jenny Flemming laughed at his baſhfulneſs, and offered to aſſiſt him; "Come, (ſaid ſhe,) we will each of us take a ſheet of paper, and compoſe a tender epiſtle; you

you ſhall have your choice of the whole collection." We joined in the frolic, and every one ſat down to a table, to form a proper letter on the occaſion. They were all to be read aloud. Some were wrote in the moſt deſpairing ſtrains; others with a ray of hope; but all, except mine, abounded with the moſt laviſh compliments and high-flown expreſſions.

Miſs *Flemming* objected to mine, as too cool and ſentimental. Every one elſe, however, was of a different opinion. I defended it by ſaying, "I ſuppoſed it written to a woman of *ſenſe*, who did not wiſh to deprive her Lover of *his*. And that ſhould I ever receive a love letter, I would not deſire more compliments, or more ſhew of ſincerity."

Mr. *Hartley*, the Gentleman in whoſe cauſe we had engaged, ſaid he would ſkim the cream of each, and let us know his ſucceſs. Tea called us into another room, and we forgot our bundle of nonſenſe, which was left behind on the table.

The next day my Maid put a letter into my hand. Not knowing the hand-writing, I haſtily opened it. I found the letter I had written encloſed in another, which was ſigned by Mr. *Courtenay*. It began thus:

"PARDON me, my ever dear Miſs *Woodville*, that I uſe your own words to convince

convince you of the greateſt truth in the world. I needed not to have had recourſe to this means to ſpeak the genuine ſentiments of my heart; but I wiſh to avoid offending you. You cannot be ſo with your own production. Be not ſo then, my ever lovely *Emma*, becauſe I have ſigned it with the name of the faithful

EDWARD COURTENAY."

If you think I was not charmed with his ſtratagem, you know not my heart. Ah! I was more than charmed — My ſenſes were overpowered with delight. I read over my own letter a thouſand times — Never had my pen produced any thing ſo pleaſing to me. Yet how to act I knew not, nor what ſtep to take. My determination, however, was to let things remain as they were. I did not think it incumbent to take notice of it, if he did not; but to act in ſuch a manner, when I next ſaw him, as to prove I was not offended, even if he only meant it as a jeſt; not that I thought that to be the caſe, nor ſhould I have been very eaſy under ſuch a ſurmiſe. I found myſelf ſtrongly attached to him, and nothing can equal the felicity I experienced when I told myſelf I was dear to him.

When I ſaw him again I was walking with my Brother and Siſters; he had no

opportunity of hinting to me any thing concerning his declaration. I ſuffered ſome perturbation on our firſt meeting: But as *Clara*, my eldeſt Siſter, talked a good deal to him, I had time to recover myſelf. He looked, I thought, ſomewhat embarraſſed on the occaſion. However, nothing tranſpired on either ſide—I certainly had no reaſon for it, and yet I never paſſed ſo uneaſy a night. I had no one to impart my anxieties to; *Clara* uſed to keep me at a great diſtance, and my dear little *Fanny* was too young to be my *Confidante*. Some days intervened before my eyes were again bleſſed with the ſight of him, who, alone, made all my joys, hopes, and fears. At length I ſaw him — Still we were not alone. — He aſked me, with great trepidation, "Whether I thought Mr. *Hartley* would ſucceed in his endeavours?" I bluſhed ſo much as to prevent my anſwering immediately. "Do you think, (continued he,) ſhe is offended at his preſumption?" — "Perhaps (I anſwered,) ſhe only looked on it as the continuation of a frolic, and as ſuch has thought no more of it." — "Then, (cried he, eagerly,) ſhe knows not the ſentiments of the Man who adores her: If ſhe can doubt his ſincerity, ſhe knows not what Love is; at leaſt, (and he ſighed,) ſhe is inſenſible to his pains." — "That may not

be

be the caſe neither, (I replied, ſtill more confuſed, and not daring to lift up my eyes:) How would you have the Lady act under ſuch circumſtances?" — "I would wiſh, (ſaid he, a little more aſſured in his manner,) to read in my Fair One's eyes, that my paſſion was not diſpleaſing to her — One glance would reveal the tender ſecret, and then, if I was he, I ſhould diſcover whether it would be agreeable to her to make my honourable propoſals to her Parents." Ah! condemn me not *Louiſa!* I could not help it. I ſtole a look at him, while my cheeks were crimſoned with bluſhes, and my heart beat what language cannot tell. His joy was conſpicuous enough to me to fill my mind with the moſt pleaſing reflections. We obtained a moment's private converſation together. Never had I known delight till then.

In a few days Mr. *Courtenay* took an opportunity of declaring himſelf openly to my Father. He ingenuouſly acquainted him, he had revealed the ſecret of his heart to me; and flattered himſelf, if he was ſo happy as to obtain his (my Father's) conſent, that no oppoſition would preſent itſelf on my ſide. My Father made no objections to the propoſal, no more than ſaying, he thought me too young; he had much rather diſpoſe of my eldeſt Siſter

firſt; it was full time enough for ſuch a Child to think of marrying; that, however, he had nothing to ſay againſt it. He ſhould be always glad to ſee Mr. *Courtenay* as a Friend; and in a year or two, would gladly receive him as a Son-in-law; but that he ſhould talk to his Son, who was now from home, as he did not chuſe to give a final anſwer till his ſentiments were known.

Thus this negative kind of conſent was all Mr. *Courtenay* could obtain. However, he ſtill continued to viſit as a Friend. The whole place gave him to me as a Lover. I was too happy in his ſociety to think of the diſtance of time. I was ſatisfied of the integrity of his heart.

My Siſter was diſſatisfied at my gaining a conqueſt over the heart of ſo handſome and accompliſhed a Man as Mr. *Courtenay*; not that I believe ſhe would have loved him; but that ſhe could not ſupport the idea of her younger Siſter having the preference ſhewn her. She had, unhappily, a little tincture of envy in her diſpoſition. She could but ill bear a Competitor, and I unfortunately had ſome attractions which were not ſeen or allowed in her. — My Brother poſſeſſed a great haughtineſs of ſoul — I never experienced any brotherly affection from him — Though I could

not

not reſiſt my partiality for him, I loved him as much as I dared; but I ever feared him ſtill more — I dreaded leſt he ſhould form any objection to Mr. *Courtenay*, to whom he had always behaved with a forced politeneſs; my Siſter had too much the ſame ſentiments with him. They were inſeparable Companions; it was very ſeldom they would permit me to be of their parties, and if they did, it was a thouſand chances to one they made me repent of it, by ſaying or doing ſome ill-natured or unfraternal thing.

My Mother was very kind to me, and with her and my dear *Fanny*, with now and then ſeeing my tender *Edward*, I paſſed my life very happily. Inſenſibly his viſits loſt the appearance of friendly ones only — They became more frequent, and we were allowed the free interchange of our ſouls. Ah! how bliſsful then were our ſcenes! How free from all inquietude! My Father permitted him to make preparations for our union. The time was drawing near; he thought it neceſſary to ſettle his affairs at *Oxford*; he took leave of us for that purpoſe. From *Oxford* he was to go to his own Seat, to put every thing in order for my reception. — Ah! how my heart ached when my eyes looked their laſt! — Suffuſed with tears, I could ſcarcely behold him. — He

kiſſed off the trickling drop which ſtole down my glowing cheek — "Deareſt, lovelieſt of Women, (ſaid he,) be not too much affected at a ſeparation, which precedes our happy meeting — Think, when next I ſee you, we meet to part no more. That dear hope will conſole me. I ſhall bleſs each moment that goes by, as it will bring me ſo much the nearer to my only comfort." I could not ſpeak, I was too much affected; beſides, my Father, of whom I ever ſtood in the greateſt awe, was preſent. I had only power to claſp my hands together — My lips eſſayed to offer a prayer for his ſpeedy return, but it returned into my own breaſt. Sure my diſtreſs was portentous of our misfortunes. *Louiſa*, I never more beheld him; never more were my eyes permitted to bend their beams on his, Oh! let me ſay, his ſtill adored image! and that they never may is now my only wiſh. Ah! what floods of tenderneſs pour in upon my ſoul. Dear fatal ideas, I muſt not indulge ye!

"Of all afflictions taught a Lover yet,
'Tis ſure, the hardeſt ſcience to forget!"

As poor *Eloiſa* ſays,

"Unequal taſk! a paſſion to reſign,
For hearts ſo touch'd, ſo pierc'd, ſo loſt as mine!
Ere ſuch a ſoul regains its peaceful ſtate,
How often muſt it love, how often hate!
How often hope, deſpair, reſent, regret,
Conceal, diſdain,—do all things, but forget."

Oh! my *Louiſa!* from this fatal ſeparation I date all my length of woes. The painful recollection of all that followed, is too powerful.

Ambition, as the poor deluded *Edward* ſays, was my ruin. Still let him think ſo — Still let him believe me falſe, leſt pity, when he hears the fatal truth, ſhould add ſharper ſtings to his afflicted breaſt than he has already felt. Ambition, however, was not the cauſe alone — other fell paſſions aroſe to countermine our plan of happineſs. My heart was too full of his dear image, to admit any other ſentiment; — no other ever has gained admittance than the moſt poignant grief and deſpair.

I cannot go on; my ſpirits ſink under the weight of affliction, which this recital occaſions. You ſhall ſoon hear again more of the unhappy

EMMA CLEVELAND.

LETTER XVIII.

To Lady LOUISA STRETTON.

THE day after my ſeparation from Mr. *Courtenay*, a young Nobleman arrived at our houſe, to whom my Father had been Guardian. I am conſtrained now,

my dear Lady *Louiſa*, to lay before you ſome family ſecrets; which, for *their* honour, I wiſh could be concealed. My Father had, through ambitious views, been induced to put up for the County; he made an oppoſition partly out of pique to the old Member, and partly for the honour of preſiding in the Senate, which coſt him an immenſe ſum of money. The loſs of his Election had greatly ſoured his temper, naturally none of the ſweeteſt — But the true cauſe we knew not; as he never made my Mother the *Confidante* of his intentions. My Brother, I believe, knew all his ſecrets.

Though I have been cruelly uſed, and though the ſacrifices I have made for my family have reduced me to the utmoſt miſery, yet it pains me to the ſoul to diſcover the faults of my Parent. He had, my *Louiſa*, (ah! to what fatal lengths an ambitious man will run!) he had taken an illegal advantage of his Ward's nonage, and embezzled a very large ſum of money belonging to him: From this cauſe flowed all the diſtreſs which enſued to me.

My Brother, juſt at this period, became violently in love with a young Lady of high birth and expectations. The little probability he had of ſucceeding with her family, as he was by no means an adequate match, as it threw him into very great perplexity,

plexity, made his diſpoſition ten times worſe than ever.

Lord *Cleveland* was come, with a full reſolution of having all this money accounted for. You muſt judge of the ſituation of my Father and Brother. So far from receiving ſo much more from my Father, as might enable him to make a ſuitable ſettlement on Lady *Bell Haſtings*, he had great reaſon to think he ſhould be deprived of his eſtate. As I ſay, things were in this ſituation when Lord *Cleveland* arrived. You know your Couſin; I will not ſay what impreſſion he could make on a heart filled with the idea of *Courtenay*. I had not ſeen him for ſome years; as I was quite a child when he had laſt been at *Woodville-Hall*, he knew me not. Fatally, however, for me, he found perfections in my perſon that I wiſhed none to be ſenſible of but my *Edward*. In ſhort, I became dearer to him than the buſineſs he came about. He talked of me to my Brother, who informed him I was engaged to a Mr. *Courtenay*. He had been formerly acquainted with *Edward*, being of the ſame College, and, as I have ſince learned, once had a very great regard for him, which, however, had been interrupted by a quarrel. Lord *Cleveland*, with another Gentleman-Commoner, had, by a falſe pretence, decoyed a young girl into a bad houſe;

they attempted to uſe her very ill; Mr. *Courtenay* fortunately was going by, and heard her ſcreams. He with much difficulty reſcued her from theſe wretches. A challenge afterwards paſſed, and they met; Mr. *Courtenay* received Lord *Cleveland*'s fire, but refuſed to follow his lead. Interpoſing friends adjuſted the difference, but Lord *Cleveland* never forgave him, cheriſhing in his boſom deadly hatred, and hopes of revenge. An opportunity, the moſt cruel and baſe, now preſented itſelf. Oh! *Louiſa*, could you think thus of your Couſin? The loſs of ten thouſand pounds, for the recovery of which, the day before, he would have gone any lengths, and reduced a family to ſhame and poverty, ſeemed now trivial to him, when ſet in competition with Love and Revenge. Ah! was it then given to me, who had inſpired ſo noble a flame in the boſom of my generous *Edward*, to create a paſſion in the heart of ſuch a man? But the ſame flower ſupplies the bee with honey, and the ſpider with poiſon.

He laid before my Brother his intentions. Eager to catch at any means to enrich himſelf, and likewiſe give him hopes of poſſeſſing Lady *Bell*, he ſwore to join with Lord *Cleveland*. How could a Brother, whoſe heart was ſenſible of the joys and inquietudes of Love, ſeek the ruin of a Siſter, incapable

capable of wiſhing him ill, join in ſo cruel a ſcheme of deſtroying all her hopes of happineſs?

They agreed to make the propoſal known to my Father. Happy to find a method of extricating himſelf from the difficulties he had been plunged into, he ſaid he would conſider of it. Lord *Cleveland* gave him to underſtand, that on no other terms would he releaſe him; if he uſed his authority with me, he would withdraw his proſecution, and likewiſe make over to *James*, my Brother, Four Hundred a-year, to increaſe his ſettlement, and enſure him, at the next General Election, a Seat in the Houſe. Theſe, then, were the terms, which my Father thought the eternal welfare of his Child too trifling a conſideration to induce him to neglect.

When my Mother was made acquainted with theſe particulars, ſhe burſt into tears, and intreated my Father not to conſent to my miſery, which ſhe well foreſaw muſt enſue, not only from the ſeparation of two hearts tenderly united, but from my marriage with a man actuated by ſuch illaudable views. "I did not, (replied my Father, with more than uſual haughtineſs,) aſk you for your advice, or mean to be prevailed on by your nonſenſe; your taſk is, to prepare

the Girl for the reception of Lord *Cleveland*, as a Lover ſhe muſt and ſhall accept.

Too well my Mother knew it would be in vain to ſay any more, ſo ſhe wiped her eyes, and ſought me out. I was ſitting in a little dreſſing-room adjoining to my chamber, and had juſt finiſhed reading a letter from the moſt amiable of men.

I ſaw the traces of tears on my Mother's cheek. "What is the matter, Mama, (aſked I,) you have been weeping?"—"Nothing, my Dear, (ſhe anſwered;) what have you been employed about this morning, *Emma?*" "Oh! (ſaid I, ſmiling,) I have been a ſad idle Girl; I have been as long reading this letter, as if I had ſpelt every word."—"Who is it from?" (ſaid my Mother.) "Ah! Mama, can't you gueſs from whom? Mr. *Courtenay* ſets off this day for his own houſe; he tells me he ſhall be anxious till the alterations are made that he mentioned to you and me. He propoſes building the root-houſe you ſpoke of. Ah! how happy ſhall we all be! You know, Mama, you promiſed to go down with us." My Mother immediately ſaid, with a grave countenance, "*Emma*, my Dear, you are too ſanguine; ſhould any thing happen to reverſe your proſpects, you would be leſs able to ſupport the diſappointment."—"My dear Madam, (ſaid I,) what can happen? Have

I not

I not the ſtrongeſt reaſon for relying on the fidelity of Mr. *Courtenay?* Nothing but death can divide us, and as that ſtroke is inevitable, we muſt ſubmit." — "I don't think your Father is ſo well pleaſed with Mr. *Courtenay* as he uſed to be." — "Good God! Madam, what has Mr. *Courtenay* done!" (cried I, in the utmoſt terror.) — "I know not," ſhe anſwered, but burſt into ſo ſtrong a flood of tears as left her unable to proceed, and nearly reduced me to diſtraction. I threw my arms wildly round her neck. "Tell me, (cried I,) tell me all. I can bear any thing, every thing, rather than the mournful preſages of my own thoughts. Tell me, is he dead? What misfortune has happened to him? Tell me, my deareſt Mother, the whole ſad ſtory at once, nor kill me thus by degrees; I am prepared to hear the worſt, and God give me patience and reſignation to ſupport it."

"Be compoſed, my lovely Child; my deareſt *Emma*, compoſe yourſelf; it is not ſo bad, perhaps, as you think; Mr. *Courtenay* is well, for aught I know to the contrary; but prepare yourſelf, my deareſt Love, to meet a diſappointment which I am conſtrained to acquaint you with."

I fell on my knees, and lifting up my hands and eyes to Heaven, "I implore thee, O merciful Father, (cried I,) to ſtrengthen

ſtrengthen me to ſupport the ills I am going to be made acquainted with; do thou, Oh! God, have compaſſion on my burſting heart, and teach me a divine reſignation to thy Decrees. My *Courtenay*, the beloved of my ſoul, is well; — if he can have falſified his vows — Oh! he cannot! I will not harbour ſo unjuſt a ſurmiſe."

At that period of time my Father entered the room, and ſeeing me weeping at my Mother's feet, judged I had been acquainted with my misfortunes. "*Emma*, (ſaid he,) why do I ſee you in that poſture?" — "It is this poſture alone which ſuits beſt one who is waiting the diſcloſure of ſome heavy affliction."—"Have you not told the Girl, then, of my Will?" (aſked my Father, in a harſh accent.)—"Oh! (cried my Mother,) the diſtreſs of my Child ſubdues me." — "Then you are not fit to be with her, (ſaid he.) Her head is full of romantic ideas, imbibed from the curſed books you have ſuffered her to peruſe; ſhe will, by and by, fancy herſelf the perſecuted Heroine of ſome Novel; a *Clariſſa*, or ſome ſuch fantaſtical or fictitious Character. Three words will inform her of my pleaſure, which, if ſhe is a Child of mine, ſhe ſhall conform to." All the while I remained kneeling, with my head bowed on my Mother's lap, and my arms folded round

round her waiſt; but when I thought my Mother would leave me to my Father, I withdrew my arms, and claſping my hands together, "Oh! (cried I,) if I muſt receive this ſevere blow, let me receive it from the hand of my Mother; her tenderneſs will ſoften the cruel ſtroke."

"Your Father, then, (ſaid he, with an angry tone,) is a Tyrant, I ſuppoſe, in your opinion! Little as you ſeem to deſerve it, I will tell you, *Emma*, you may eaſily intitle yourſelf to my utmoſt tenderneſs; but beware, I caution you, beware of my wrathful indignation; that of impending Fate is not more certain."

"I make no doubt, (ſaid my Mother, with her uſual condeſcending ſweetneſs,) I make no doubt, Mr. *Woodville*, that our Child will comply with your wiſhes; do but, my deareſt Love, allow her a little time."

"You are wrong, you are wrong, Mrs. *Woodville*, but you have ever been ſo with regard to that Girl. Inform her ſpeedily of my intentions, and prepare her to appear at dinner, in the temper I wiſh to ſee, or let me never behold her again."

Senſible as I was of ſomething dreadful to be revealed, I know not how it was, I had no idea what it could be. My Father terrified me ſo much with his manner and menaces,

menaces, as almoſt to deprive me of my ſenſes. I ſtill continued my poſition—I ſeemed rooted to the floor. I no longer petitioned my Mother to inform me of the fatal news, but waited my deſtiny with a calm ſtupidity. My Mother hung over me ſome time, weeping and ſpeechleſs as myſelf. At laſt, "My *Emma!* child of my tendereſt care and affections, (ſaid ſhe, in the ſofteſt ſoothing voice,) riſe, my beloved, and liſten to thy ſorrowing Mother. Think how her heart bleeds at every vein for the diſtreſs ſhe muſt be the unwilling relater of; yet ſhe has taken that taſk, that her participating of your griefs may help you to ſupport their weight; ſhe will drop tear for tear, and echo all your ſighs. But change your ſituation, my Darling, it wounds my ſoul to ſee you in this attitude."

I roſe, hardly knowing what I was about, and ſeated myſelf by her. "Now, Madam, (ſaid I, with great calmneſs,) let me know what it is my Father expects from me."—"Every thing, my *Emma*, that an heroic, a virtuous, a dutiful Child can perform. It is expected, my Love, that you will, without viſible repugnance, make, what may appear to you, one of the greateſt ſacrifices—Think what that is, and judge what is to be done. I need not tell you, your Father's determinations are irreverſible: I have found them

them ſo ever ſince my connexions with him. I cannot, I fear, hope he will be more indulgent to a Child than a Wife, whoſe only ſtudy has been his pleaſure. I would wiſh my Child ſhould gueſs the import of my meaning, and ſpare me the cruel taſk of explaining myſelf more fully."

"Ah! Madam, you need not. I ſee Miſery open like a gulph before me, ready to overwhelm me in its abyſs. But what, (continued I, holding up my folded hands,) what have I—what has the moſt amiable, moſt loved of men done, that our final ſeparation is determined?—for too well my boding heart informs me, that is the will of my harſh, my cruel Father. But never, never can I forſake him; never ſhall my heart relinquiſh his faithful image. The greateſt Tyrant cannot force the Will.—Ever ſhall he be the delight of my ſoul, and my deareſt affections evermore ſhall be his."

"Oh! my much-loved, much-to-be-pitied Child, little will theſe reſolutions avail you. You muſt, believe me, you muſt for ever relinquiſh your attachment to the unfortunate *Courtenay*—Nay, that is not all, (ſeeing I was going to interrupt her,) you muſt likewiſe endeavour to transfer your affections on another—Lord *Cleveland*."

I could hold no longer—"Never, never, (I exclaimed in an agony,) ſo proſper me Heaven!

Heaven! May the worſt of ills betide me if I, even in thought, conſent to ſo impious a propoſition! The worſt of fortune I will defy, the ſevereſt of hardſhips ſubmit to; but while I have life or ſenſe remaining, the world ſhall not bribe me with its gifts, nor terrify me with its frowns, to force me to comply. All interceſſions, prayers, threats, or menaces ſhall never take effect on my ſtedfaſt ſoul."

"*Emma!* (cried my Mother,) I expected leſs violence from you; you do not treat me well. My tender concern and indulgent affection ſhould not meet this return. You would not have dared to uſe theſe expreſſions before your Father—Am I leſs intitled to your conſideration for having ever been the fondeſt of Mothers, and having taken on myſelf this employment, rather than ſuffering your Father to do it? Oh! my *Emma!* do not give me reaſon to think that Terror can ſooner obtain a compliance than Love."

"Forgive me! forgive your unhappy Child! (cried I, throwing myſelf again at her feet, and bathing her hands with my tears, tears that ſpoke the agony of my ſoul)—Think, that the cruel tale you have unfolded has almoſt deprived me of ſenſe; wonder not, then, at the effect of my phrenzy. Oh! my Mother, add not the weight

weight of your anger to the oppreſſions of grief that are heaped on me. Think of my ſufferings! think of what is expected from me! Pity a forlorn undone wretch, who has not in the wide world one Friend beſides yourſelf. See at your feet a Child, whom, on your entering this room, you found laying out ſchemes of future happineſs;—ſchemes, ſhe had been authorized by her Father to indulge;—think, in one ſhort moment they have been all overthrown, and forgive me the agonizing effuſions of a broken heart."

"Ah! my Child! (cried my tender ſympathizing Mother,) ſeek not thus to ſubdue me. *Emma*, you know the intereſt you have ever had in my boſom, and your power over me; but all my affection cannot alter your ſituation. This ſacrifice muſt be made; your objections will not avail. Hear me, my Child, hear, from the lips of your Mother, the reaſons which have induced your Father to act in this ſeemingly harſh manner. It is not from any diſlike to Mr. *Courtenay*, but from another more forcible cauſe."

"Can my Father retract his word? Did he not allow me to beſtow my heart, and its every ſoft emotion, on Mr. *Courtenay?* Did he refuſe his conſent? How then can he

he form the remoteſt idea of my ever tranſferring that affection to another?"

"Will you aſk theſe queſtions of your Father, *Emma?* Let your own anſwer be mine."

"Again, my ever-honoured Mother, I intreat forgiveneſs. I ſubmit to the ſevere decree. Behold me, like the devoted offering, waiting the final ſtroke."

"Oh! my Beloved, why do you ſoften me thus? The time which your Father has allotted me to prepare you in, will be waſted in fruitleſs lamentings and expoſtulations. Hear me, then, my *Emma*, and believe thy Mother would freely lay down her life to ſave her Child from this heavy trial. Your poor Father, (for, my *Emma*, he is to be pitied,) has brought himſelf into great difficulties on account of the Election. He had money in his hands belonging to his Ward, Lord *Cleveland*; ſanguine in his expectations of gaining his point, he appropriated this ſum to the favourite purpoſe of his heart. He ſuſtained a diſappointment, and his affairs ſince have been too much embarraſſed to replace the money ſo employed; or, as the world would call it, embezzled. Should this tranſaction be made public, the reputation of your Father is for ever loſt—The payment of this ſum will be his ruin; ſince I believe you might have gathered from

ſome

ſome hints which I have occaſionally thrown out, that your Father has lived beyond his income. Your Brother *James* has not a little contributed to the *derangement*. He has been too apt to conſider himſelf only; your Father has given him all he could ſpare, to make him a match for Lady *Bell*—An union equally coveted by Father and Son. Lord *Cleveland*'s ſole errand here was to conſtrain your Father to make reſtitution for his errors.—I would ſoften the failings of my Huſband, if poſſible. Your charms, my ſweet Girl, have triumphed over the angry and cruel purpoſes of Lord *Cleveland*. He ſwears to befriend our Family; he has made noble propoſals—And, Oh! that my Child could reſtore eaſe and comfort to her afflicted Parents!—Oh! that my tender *Emma* could make this one ſacrifice, to eſtabliſh the fortunes and felicity of her houſe! Your Father, my deareſt Love, would command, with a Father's authority.—Your Mother lays aſide all hers; and condeſcends to expoſtulate, to petition, to implore on her knees, her darling Child to ſave her, her children, her family, from perdition."

Great God! Do I live to repeat it? My venerable, my beloved Mother, ſunk on her knees by me, folding her arms round my waiſt, and ſobbing on my boſom.

Ah!

"Ah! Spare me! ſpare me! (cried I, claſping my arms round her neck,) ſpare me this torture! Oh! What is there, I would not rather do, than ſee you thus! Eternal miſery; nay, the perdition you urge me to deliver you from, cannot equal the exceſs of my anguiſh, when I ſee my Mother, my ever adored Mother, on her aged knees before me. Riſe, riſe, for Heaven's ſake, or I expire in your arms, my Mother!" The horror I felt cannot be expreſſed — can never be equalled — I hung gaſping round her neck. — My eye-ſight forſook me; my encircling arms looſed themſelves, and I was ſinking, fainting to the floor. My tender, indulgent Mother ſupported me, with much difficulty got me up into a chair, and, ſitting down by me, ſuffered me to reſt my head on her ſhoulder; ſhe had thrown one arm round me, and with the other held ſome *Eau de luce*, which ſhe obliged me to ſmell to. As ſoon as I a little recovered myſelf, "I have hopes, (ſaid ſhe,) that, for the ſake of her Mother, my *Emma* will comply with her Father's Will. Your tenderneſs for me, my deareſt Love, excites thoſe hopes. If you cannot ſupport the poſture I but now aſſumed, how could your gentle heart bear to ſee all your family ruined, and knew it remained in your breaſt to raiſe them to affluence

fluence and honour? How could my *Emma* reſiſt a whole family pleading for her to be its ſaviour? Could ſhe behold her Father, who has ever borne a reſpectable character, branded with infamy, and know her voice could clear his fame, and yet with-hold it? Oh! my lovely Child! can you not ſacrifice your paſſion for theſe advantages, and ſave your Parents from deſcending to their graves with ſorrow, and endleſs ſhame?"

"Was the life of your Child, your *Emma*, the only ſacrifice expected, ah! with what joy could ſhe reſign it! How freely would ſhe extend her arms to meet the blow, which ſhould for ever wipe from her ſad remembrance the events of this day! But my death will not be accepted as a peace-offering—More, ah, how much more than the moſt cruel of all deaths is exacted from me!—Not only to be bid to reſign all my long indulged, long authoriſed hopes, but to give my hand to a man already armed againſt my Family, and who has once lifted up his impious hand againſt the life of the moſt honoured of Men. It cannot, cannot be!"

"Ah! is then the love of *Courtenay* ſo much to be prized above all other conſiderations?—Has your affection for him turned all your filial, your ſiſterly love into deadly hatred? Has it rendered you inſenſible to the

the tender calls of Compaſſion? Can you ſo far prefer your own happineſs, before the glory, the welfare of your Family, as to conſign it to infamy without concern? Are the ſupplications of your ſorrowing Mother of no account? Ah, *Emma!* what is there, that I requeſt of you, which I would not freely ſuffer to procure your happineſs? But the Child of my tendereſt love, will not ſacrifice her chance of happineſs to me — No; ſhe can unmoved behold the wreck, the deſtruction of her houſe, and ſmile o'er its ruins, while ſhe exults in the heart-felt ſatisfaction of doing all this, to prove her inviolable attachment to her Lover. Ah! *Emma*, you love me not."

"Witneſs theſe tears! — Witneſs this agonizing ſorrow, how unjuſtly I am accuſed, by my once tender Mother, of want of affection!"

"Your tears, your ſorrow is not ſufficient to convince me — Your actions muſt ſpeak for you. You take advantage of my tenderneſs, you wound my ſoul by your diſtreſſes; but I have no influence on you."

"You have, you have, (ſobbed I.) If I ſhall be forced to comply, it ſhall be ſolely owing to my tenderneſs for you. I could reſiſt all elſe — Even I think I could combat with my Father's menacing threats — but

But you, my dear Mother, ſhall have the merit of it. It ſhall be your fiat which ſhall conſign your Child to endleſs miſery, if her death, her ſpeedy death, diſappoints not Lord *Cleveland* of his deſtined prey. Yet is it in Nature to ſupport theſe ills? Ah! no, I feel I ſhall ſink under them. Yes, Death will ſoon come to my relief, and heal the wounded breaſt of the wretched *Emma*."

"My dear romantic Girl! (cried my Mother,) I muſt leave you if you talk thus. You know not what anguiſh I endure each moment for you. I muſt leave you, my *Emma*, I am too much affected by your ſorrows." Almoſt at that inſtant *Clara* entered the room. "Dinner waits, (ſaid ſhe;) *Emma*, my Papa will not be pleaſed to ſee you thus. Do not, for God's ſake, riſk his anger. Madam, (to my Mother,) my Father is impatient." "I come, I come, my *Clara*, inſtantly.—(Then turning and kiſſing my cheek,) Suffer me, my Sweet One, to lead you down—Dry up thoſe precious tears, and allow thy Mother the ſatisfaction of ſeeing thee ſupply thy uſual place at table."—"Oh! do not, do not aſk me—Oh! Mama, I cannot, I cannot go down."—"What will your Papa ſay to this perverſeneſs, *Emma?* For God's ſake dry your eyes; here is your handkerchief." I caught her hand, and preſſing it

to my boſom, burſt into a freſh flood of tears, "Oh! *Clara*, *Clara!* (cried I,) you know not what I have ſuffered.—Intreat my Mother not to inſiſt on my going down ſtairs. Death would be infinitely leſs dreadful to me than the ſight of Lord *Cleveland.*" "Can you then ſupport the face of an enraged Parent?" ſhe ſaid.—"Ah! will you, my deareſt Siſter, my ſweet *Clara*, will you be my Mediator there?—I know my Father will grant this ſmall requeſt to your prayer—And I ſhall owe this indulgence to the interceſſions of my Siſter."

"That will not avail you much; however, I will tell my Father you had rather be excuſed dining below."—"Tell him, (cried I,) I implore this indulgence from him on my knees;" ſaying which I ſunk upon them, and lifted up my hands to my Siſter, to beſpeak her favour.

My poor Mother had ſlid out of the room to make herſelf fit to appear below.—*Clara* left me, ſaying, "Your ſublime ideas have weakened your head; but that will not excuſe you from your duty."

I roſe and threw myſelf into a chair, and, laying my head over a table, gave a freſh looſe to my tears. I remained ſome time in this poſture, when the door opened, and my little *Fanny* came in with a mournful air—"Oh! my *Emma*, (ſaid the dear Girl,) how do I grieve to ſee you thus: Yes,

my deareſt Siſter, my heart bleeds for you. How ſhall I then tell you how angry my Papa is on your account? My poor Mama — He is in a ſad paſſion with her. He ſays, ſhe has ſpoiled you, by her abſurd indulgence; that by her fooliſh flattery ſhe has raiſed in you ſo high an opinion of your excellencies, that you ſet yourſelf above his authority, or any other conſideration. He was coming up to you himſelf — I ſtarted up, and catching hold of his hand, "Let me go, Papa," ſaid I. I thought I ſhould have died when I found he intended coming up — "I will go if you permit me, Papa, and inform my Siſter *Emma*, that you chuſe ſhe ſhould appear." While he ſeemed deliberating, I took the opportunity of whiſpering Lord *Cleveland*: "For God's ſake, my Lord, do not ſuffer my Father to inſiſt on my poor Siſter's coming down; you ſee the diſtreſs of my Mama; *Emma* muſt be unfit to appear." — Lord *Cleveland* ſaid, "Mr. *Woodville*, you muſt excuſe your lovely Daughter to-day — You will make her my Enemy, inſtead of joining with me to conciliate her good opinion. Conſider, my whole happineſs is centered in the hope of her being mine; do not encreaſe the difficulty." — "And ſhe ſhall be yours, my Lord, though the final deſtruction of the univerſe ſhould follow your union. For once the perverſe Girl ſhall be indulged —

Theſe Beauties muſt not be treated in a common method. Her vanity has been too much fed lately. *Fanny*, I give you leave to go up to her — Tell her to name ſome diſh whereof ſhe will partake — And charge her, if ſhe values my bleſſing, or dreads my bittereſt vengeance, to prepare herſelf to meet this Aſſembly in the Drawing-room at five o'clock, with a heart and mind devoted to my will." — "Such, my beloved Siſter, is the mandate of our Father. He has, however, been kind in allowing me to dine with you here." She then named ſuch diſhes as compoſed the dinner. You will believe I had no appetite to eat, but that I might not farther enrage my Father, I bid her chuſe what ſhe pleaſed. She rang the bell to give her orders, and ſuch was the delicacy and conſideration of this dear Child, that ſhe would not ſuffer the Servant to enter, but took every thing from him at the door.

She ſtrove, by a thouſand engaging ways, to excite me to eat, and when ſhe found ſhe could not ſucceed—"You will not *eat* with *me*, my *Emma*, then I will *weep* with *you*;" ſhe then gave a looſe to her grief, which ſhe had long endeavoured to reſtrain; and laying her cheek to mine, and throwing her arms round my neck, a moſt affecting ſcene followed for ſome time. While we were thus employed, the houſe clock ſtruck four.

She

She ſtarted from my arms, "Ah! my *Emma!* my poor dear Siſter, there is but one hour more for you to prepare in. You are almoſt blind with weeping. For Heaven's ſake endeavour to compoſe yourſelf; you know you muſt appear." She tenderly aſſiſted me in making myſelf ready. I knew not how I intended to comport myſelf, my grief had certainly reduced me to a ſtate of the utmoſt ſtupidity. My dear *Fanny* helped to ſupport me down the ſtairs. I entered the room trembling, tottering, and pale as the lifeleſs marble. My Mother and Siſter were ſeated there.—"This is kind, (ſaid my Mother, and held out her hand to me;) I thank you, my Love, for this compliance. Sit down by me, my *Emma*; ſit by your Mother, my ſweeteſt Child." Without being able to open my lips, or articulate a ſentence, I took a chair, drawing it rather behind my Mother's—At that moment what became of me? I ſaw my Father, Brother, and the more dreaded Lord *Cleveland*, enter. I involuntarily clapped my hands to my eyes, and bent my head over the chair whereon my Mother ſat. "Riſe, my beſt Love, (ſaid my Mother, in a low whiſper,) riſe to Lord *Cleveland*." With the utmoſt difficulty I ſtood up, but was forced to lean on the chair to ſupport my trembling limbs. Lord *Cleveland* approached, and, taking my

hand in his, (the very touch of which made me ſuddenly ſhrink back, and ſhudder as we do when we have, by accident, trod on ſome noiſome reptile,) "I hope (ſaid he) the ſight of me has not torn thoſe lovely roſes from your cheek that this morning revelled there? Say, why, my adorable Maid, this ſadneſs on your brow? Behold your *Cleveland*, wretched unleſs you deign to bleſs him." He might have gone on queſtioning me thus for hours, without the leaſt interruption on my part. But not ſo my Father.—"My Lord, my Lord, you will ſpoil that Girl. She knows my will, ſhe knows ſhe muſt comply, therefore it is her part to conform. She muſt think herſelf highly honoured by the diſtinction you pay her; but if you approach her as if ſhe was a Divinity, ſhe will adopt the ſentiment, and really fancy ſhe is formed to be adored, and give laws to her family and all the world."

I could make no other anſwer than heaving a heart-felt ſigh, and raiſing my eyes to Heaven. My Lord ſeemed willing enough to take my Father's advice, and bowing, took his ſeat by me. I ſtill edged nearer to my Mother, who did not dare even to beſtow a glance of pity on her wretched Daughter.

Lord *Cleveland* had the inſenſibility to enter into a trifling converſation with my Brother

Brother on the merits of their reſpective hunters; but could I expect more humanity from him than from my own relations? My Father, too, with as little concern, joined with them. Sometimes, indeed, (moſt unwelcome were thoſe inſtances to me,) his Lordſhip would addreſs ſome tender ſpeech—Once he attempted to take my hand; I haſtily withdrew it, not knowing that my Father's eye was on me.—"*Emma!* (cried he, in a voice that made me tremble,) is it thus you receive the honours Lord *Cleveland* beſtows on you? Can a Daughter be ſo inſenſible of the favours done her Family, to behave with ſuch ingratitude to its Benefactor?"—And is it thus, (whiſpered I to myſelf,) a Father can conſign his Child to endleſs misfortune and miſery?

"Be not too precipitate, Mr. *Woodville*, (ſaid Lord *Cleveland*,) I make no doubt my beautiful *Emma* will ſoon behold me with leſs rigour."—"Or ſhe ſhall not behold the light of the Sun," ſaid my Father, with a peremptory accent.

"Mrs. *Woodville* has too tender a nature, (he added;) ſhe has done more harm than good by her interpoſition in this affair: But, for the future, I ſhall be my own Meſſenger, and ſhall find out the moſt likely method of furthering my intentions. But we have had too much of diſcord. Son *James*, lead your ſiſter *Clara* to the harpſi-

chord, and accompany her in a piece of muſic." There was a ſpecies of tyrannical barbarity in this propoſal that cut me to the heart—I am ſorry to expreſs myſelf thus, when ſpeaking of a father, whom, by the laws of God and Nature, I am bound to revere. He knew that Lord *Cleveland* would have the cruelty to aſk me to play, and he was reſolved to make me feel every mortification he could inflict, even more than the human mind could ſupport. He even named a *Sonata*, which was a favourite piece of Mr. *Courtenay*'s; my Siſter and Brother performed it. *Clara* had the inſenſibility to obſerve, that ſhe had heard it ſo much better performed, that ſhe was unwilling to play it. She then was aſked for a Song, as if they had all combined to overthrow what little reſolution and fortitude I had remaining. She likewiſe ſung a Song out of a book Mr. *Courtenay* had preſented to me; it was one of *Jackſon*'s, and taken from an Elegy of *Hammond*'s. The words are theſe:

"Oh! ſay, thou dear poſſeſſor of my breaſt,
Where's now my wonted liberty and reſt!
Where the gay moments which I once have known,
O where that heart I fondly thought my own!
I ſcorn the beauties common eyes adore,
The more I view them—feel thy worth the more;
Unmov'd I hear them ſpeak,—I ſee them fair,
And only think on thee—who art not there."

While

While ſhe ſung, each note vibrated on my ears, as I had ſo lately liſtened to the harmonious cadence of my poor *Courtenay*. Oh! theſe, theſe are his ſentiments, (cried I to myſelf,) they breathe his very ſoul; and muſt I forſake him? Muſt I plunge him in deſpair? and return the ſincereſt of all paſſions with perfidy and inconſtancy? Muſt I give that hand to another, he juſtly deems his right? Ah! is he not, at this moment, ornamenting his dwelling, and fondly exulting in the hope of ſeeing me ſmile my thanks; and muſt I forſake him? Muſt I wed his deadly foe?—Think what I felt during this mental ſoliloquy. My anguiſh got the better of my prudence; I forgot there were any witneſſes of my diſtreſs. I ſtarted up, and claſped my hands together, "Oh! ſave me, Heaven, (cried I,) ſince nothing leſs can ſave me!"—"Is the Girl gone mad?" (ſaid my Father;) and certainly, for the time, I was ſo; for what could indicate it more than my extravagant behaviour? My Father's voice brought me back to the full uſe of my ſenſes, and I ſunk down into my chair, trembling and abaſhed. "Come, (ſaid my Brother,) as you have found the uſe of your ſpeech, perhaps, *Emma*, you may be able to add your voice; you uſed to be very fond of ſinging."—"And you, *James*, (anſwered I,) uſed to behave rather in a

more brotherly manner; it is doubly cruel in you to inſult the diſtreſs which you yourſelf have created."—"Moſt wonderfully ſublime! moſt enchanting! Miſs *Emma Woodville!*" (drawled he out, with the moſt aggravating ſneer.)—"You are ſevere, *James*, (cried my Mother;) I do not take it well of you. Lord *Cleveland*, (ſhe added,) you ought to prevent the poor Child from receiving theſe mortifications." My Mother deſtroyed the effect her tenderneſs would otherwiſe have had on my heart, by making it a point with Lord *Cleveland* to become my Champion. He thought it neceſſary to make a parade of his attachment, and taking my hand, he proteſted I ſhould never receive any on his account; that his love ſhould protect me.—"And, Mr. *Woodville*, (he added to my Brother,) I muſt inſiſt on your not deſiring your lovely Siſter to do any thing ſhe does not approve of."—"I am ſure, (returned my unbrotherly Brother,) that if ſhe is not all gratitude to you for your condeſcenſion and goodneſs, I ſhall think more hardly of her than I am permitted to ſay."

As I leaned over my Mother's chair, I whiſpered her, if I might not retire? "I wiſh, my Love, (ſhe returned, in the ſame manner,) it was in my power to permit you that, or any thing elſe you deſire." Her words brought tears into my eyes; I could

could not prevent their trickling down. "Leave your Mother's chair, *Emma*, (ſaid my Father,) come hither, and ſit down by me; the time has been, when you have not been ſo backward. Come hither, I ſay, undutiful and obſtinate Girl." I roſe, and tottered acroſs the room to him. He caught hold of my hand, and giving me a pull which I was too weak to reſiſt, I fell down on my knees. I really did not intend to take that poſition, as I certainly could form no idea that my attitude would affect him more than my diſtreſs, which was ſo apparent in my looks. "Oh! theſe ready knees," ſaid my Brother *James* to my Siſter *Clara*. Lord *Cleveland* flew acroſs the room to raiſe me; my poor Mother ſat transfixed, as pale as aſhes; and my dear *Fanny* with her heart almoſt burſting. My Mother, I believe, thought I was going to implore the pity of my inexorable Father. Whatever had been my intentions, his ſpeech prevented them. "Kneel not to me, *Emma*; I am not to be won upon by the tears and arts of women; ſo, pray, riſe, and let us have none of your tragedy attitudes, and rants." With the aſſiſtance of Lord *Cleveland*, I aroſe. "Indeed, Sir, (cried I, with a feeble and tremulous voice,) I diſclaim all arts—neither am I ſo vain, or weak, to imagine my poſture, or tears, could penetrate your boſom in my favour. It was

bodily weakneſs, joined to your haſtily ſnatching my hand, which brought me on my knees before you." — "Then you are too proud, too lofty, to kneel to me, are you? Your Father does not merit ſuch ſubmiſſions."—"Oh! Sir! (cried I, throwing myſelf again on my knees,) call me not proud and lofty—I would grow to the earth at your feet, could I but indulge the dear hope of regaining a place in your affection. You know my ſituation, you know the full extent of my ſorrows; you too well know."—"Silence, on your obedience," ſaid he, ſternly; though I thought I perceived ſome marks of tender concern in his eyes. "I will hear no more. You are a little Syren, *Emma*; but, like *Ulyſſes*, I will, I muſt deafen my ears to your ſoothing ſoftneſs."—"Ah! do not, (cried I,) do not, my deareſt Father, harden your heart againſt a kneeling Child."—"This is too much, (exclaimed my Mother.) Oh! Mr. *Woodville!* Oh! Lord *Cleveland!* can you ſee my Child, my *Emma*, kneeling at your feet;" for I had juſt turned my uplifted hands to him. "Can you behold and not pity, not redreſs her griefs?"—"Fooliſh woman! (ſaid my Father,) you will undo all our work—It is you who harden her heart againſt her duty. Fool that I was, why did I ſuffer you to preach your nonſenſe to her. Go, *Emma*, get to

thy

thy chamber; there meditate on your duty to me. I am grieved, my Lord, to the ſoul, that a Child of mine ſhould be ſo inſenſible of the honour you intend her. But why do I ſay a Child of mine? I renounce her to all eternity; and may the heavieſt curſe"—"Oh! ſtop! (I cried, in an agony.) My Father!—Will no one ſtep in between, and ſave me from my Father's curſe? Behold your victim, (cried I, almoſt frantic; riſing, and throwing my arms round his neck.) "Now let my Father curſe me! Ah! did ever Father curſe his Child, while in his arms!"

"Take her away, (cried my Father,) take her from me. I cannot bear this." *James Woodville* was too ready to obey his Father. He tore me from him, and even held me forcibly. Lord *Cleveland* was likewiſe moved; he hid his face with his handkerchief. My Mother! who ſhall ſpeak her agonies! My Father threw himſelf into a chair almoſt breathleſs. My dear Mother approached him with the utmoſt tenderneſs. "My Love! (ſaid ſhe,) can you wonder at my being ſubdued by this unhappy Child, when you are ſo much affected?—Oh! who can reſiſt her melting perſuaſion!"

"I cannot help being moved, I allow, (returned my Father, a little recovered,) but nothing can alter the purpoſe of my ſoul.

ſoul. Go, *Clara*, lead your Siſter to her chamber. I will not truſt your Mother with her. They will, by their mutual whinings, harden each other's heart, and make my taſk a more difficult one. No interceſſions: I will be obeyed."

My Siſter took my arm under her's. I attempted to ſpeak; but my riſing ſobs prevented me. I curtſey'd, and left the room, ſo weak and debilitated as to be ſcarcely able to move up the ſtairs.

When I regained my room, I threw myſelf on a ſeat, and again gave a looſe to my over-charged heart. *Clara* bid me be comforted. "Think, *Emma*, (ſaid ſhe,) that to this trial you muſt ſubmit, and bear it with that fortitude which my Mama has ever ſaid you poſſeſſed. Wherein will you ſhew your excellence over the reſt of the world, if you cannot make this ſacrifice to the honour of your family?"—"I cannot argue with you, *Clara*; my diſtreſſes are too keen. Ah! would to Heaven Lord *Cleveland* had diſtinguiſhed you."—"If he had, (ſaid ſhe,) I ſhould not give my Papa ſo much trouble as you have done."—"My Siſter, then, (cried I,) would be happy with him: Lord *Cleveland* would be happy too; with me he never can. What perfection is there in me, which does not ſhine in my *Clara* twofold: Her partiality, too, would make her beauties more conſpicuous."

cuous." — "My partiality, Miſs *Emma!* And do you ſuppoſe me ſo very poor in ſentiment as to accept a rejected Lover of my younger Siſter? No, Madam, though I cannot boaſt *your* perſonal attractions, though the roſe and lily are not ſo happily blended in *my* cheek, though the diamond outſhines *my* eyes, I am not yet ſo fallen, proud Beauty, as to take up with your leavings."—"Unjuſt *Clara!* unjuſt both to yourſelf and me. Have I ever boaſted of perſonal attractions? Have I ever aſcribed merit to myſelf on that account? No, my Siſter; on the contrary, would to God this envied beauty was a lump of deformity, hideous to the beholders; ſo little is beauty eſtimated by me, and ſo little ſatisfaction do I expect from it."—"Yes, it is by thoſe arts you ſeduce all mankind, by your affected humility; but I have long ſeen through you; your Brother ſees through you; my Papa ſees you in your proper colours, Siren as you are! Your Mama, indeed, is ſtill your dupe, but from that you will reap little advantage."—"Oh! Siſter *Clara!* Siſter *Clara!* (ſaid I,) ſorry am I to ſee through you too; ſorry am I to ſee you burſting with envy towards one who ſtands in need of your pity and compaſſion."—"Envy! envy! (ſhe repeated,) Am I to be inſulted thus? It is a fine time of day indeed, to be inſulted by a younger Siſter—

Siſter — But my Papa ſhall know your uſage of me, he ſhall, Miſs *Emma.*" Saying which, and burſting into tears, ſhe flew down ſtairs.

My own troubles were too great to ſuffer me to reflect on the ill offices which my enraged Siſter might do me. I ſcarcely know what were my reflections on that head, or indeed any other; my ſenſes ſeemed exceedingly confuſed; a train of melancholy ideas hurried through my brain; I was by turns giddy, ſick, and violently hot and cold; yet ſtill my thoughts were bent on *Courtenay*, and what he would ſuffer when he knew the exceſs of affliction I had undergone for his ſake. I repeated his name a thouſand times; I called on him to protect and reſcue me from the impending danger which threatened to overwhelm me. But ſhould I recount all I thought and did, I ſhall never make an end. Oh! Lady *Louiſa*, does not my juſtification begin to appear? Does not your heart melt for the cruel, and, let me ſay, unmerited ſufferings of your Friend? You ſhall ſoon have the reſt of my unhappy ſtory: In the mean time think favourably of your

EMMA CLEVELAND.

LET-

LETTER XIX.

To Lady LOUISA STRETTON.

UNmindful of the ſtate of mind in which my Siſter had left me, as you remember, I ſat ruminating on my ſad deſtiny. About ten o'clock I prepared to go to bed, — to reſt, you will readily believe, was impoſſible. While I was undreſſing, my *Fanny* ſlid into the room. "I have ſtolen hither, (ſaid ſhe ſoftly,) juſt for one moment; Mama ſends you her Bleſſing by me, and an affectionate Kiſs; ſhe grieves that ſhe dares not fold you in her maternal arms, but my Father has abſolutely forbidden her to ſee you." — "And you too, my ſweet *Fanny*, I doubt, (ſaid I.) Oh! they rob me of every comfort, and expect I ſhould be patient under my loſſes." — "What, my dear *Emma*, could you do to *Clara*, to make her ſo angry? She came crying into the parlour; ſhe has irritated my Papa very much againſt you." — "I cannot help it, (ſaid I;) I am ſo miſerable to offend every body thus; would to Heaven I was laid low in my grave!" — "Say not ſo, my Beloved, (ſaid the dear little Girl,) make not ſo impious a wiſh. We muſt bear theſe evils. Ah! would to God I could bear a part of them, as I do

in

in them! It is very hard, but *James* has been very angry with me for crying; and ſurely that is the leaſt we can do for ſo good and ſo ſweet a Siſter—At leaſt I think it little enough. I, alas! can do nothing elſe. But he was very angry, indeed; he ſhook me by the ſhoulders ſo hard, that it pained me a long time after. Papa and Mama were in the room too. Don't you think it was very diſreſpectful in him to uſe me ſo before his Parents?"—"Oh! my Love, (cried I, claſping her to my boſom,) and you ſuffered all this for my ſake! It is becauſe you are fond of me, that they are piqued againſt you. Go, then, my ſweet Girl; do not ſtay to run the riſk of having your other ſhoulder ſhaken. Inhuman Brother! (added I, melting into tears,) do you thus envy me the pity of this little Angel?"—"He may beat me to pieces, and threaten as much as he pleaſes, but I cannot help crying; if I had not then, I ſhould have been choaked; but no matter; he would not care if all the family were dead, ſo he was but happy with his fine Lady *Bell*."

"My dear *Fanny*, (ſaid I,) I am afraid my Brother will know you have been in my apartment; they certainly meant to exclude you, from the ſame principle that I am denied the ſight of my dear Mama. Your preſence is as likely to harden my heart,

heart, as my Father ſays, as hers; but as hard as it is, I believe they will break it amongſt them. If you are admitted into my Mother's room, whiſper in her ear how much I thank her for all her indulgences, and that I receive her Bleſſing as one of the greateſt comforts I can taſte. Good night! Good night! my beloved *Fanny*. You will not wiſh me pleaſant dreams, and bid me think of your Play-fellow, as you did laſt night. Oh! *Fanny*, what a difference! I may ſay with *Torriſmond*,

"The world contains not ſo forlorn a Wretch!
Let never man believe he can be happy!
For when I thought my fortune moſt ſecure,
One fatal moment tears me from my joys;
And when two hearts were join'd by mutual Love,
The ſword of Tyranny cuts upon the knot,
And ſevers them for ever."

My voice faultered; poor *Jenny* gave me a ſilent kiſs, and bedewed my cheek with a friendly tear, and then withdrew ſoftly from my room.

Ah! what a melancholy night I paſſed! Sleep a ſtranger to my eyes, and all comfort driven from my heart. Each moment my tortured fancy preſented to my view my faithful, injured *Courtenay*. I ſaw his diſtraction, I heard his exclamations, his vows of revenge. I beheld him in a thouſand different ſituations, each more dreadful than the other. The darkneſs could not

not ſhut him out; ſtill his image returned, and floated before my ſight. The night before he had engroſſed moſt of my thoughts, but they were pleaſing ones; I fell aſleep while his idea was preſent to my memory, and in ſoft dreams again rejoiced in his ſociety. Ah! what were now my waking viſions? All horrid! all dreadful! and yet all unequal to my real ſtate.

I roſe next morning more fatigued than I had lain down; my head more diſordered, and my whole frame ſhattered. My griefs returned with the day; my ſoul ſickened at the light of the Sun; I would have cloſed my eyes in Death, but that friendly viſitor avoided me.

I ſat with my eyes fixed on the floor, motionleſs, and every ſenſe abſorbed; I believe I was, at that time, incapable of the act of thinking. A little noiſe rouſed me from my *reverie*, and I ſaw a paper puſhed under my door. "I am not quite forſaken, then," (exclaimed I,) ſaying which, I haſtily took it up, and found it to be a letter directed to *Emma Woodville*. The idea of my Mother being at the other ſide of my door, and not daring to enter, and mingle her griefs with mine, or rather ſhare mine alone; that idea, I ſay, ſtruck me ſo forcibly, that for a time I could reflect on nothing elſe, and was incapable of opening her dear Letter. I wept as if I had not till then

then had cauſe to ſhed a tear. Ah! my deareſt Mother, ſobbed I, aloud, am I for ever deprived of your loved company; muſt I not again behold you, again caſt myſelf at your honoured feet? Surely this harſh, this cruel treatment, will harden my heart, more than my tender Mother participating in the afflictions of that heart. I at length opened the Letter. I will copy it for you; the dear original I can never part with.

To EMMA WOODVILLE.

"MY deareſt Child! to tell you my heart bleeds for the diſtreſs I cannot relieve, will, I doubt, only add to thoſe diſtreſſes I would die to remove; but it is in vain. I am not even allowed the ſad privilege of ſhedding my ſorrows in the boſom of my *Emma*.

"I am ſorry to find your Siſter *Clara* has ſo much influence over your Papa; ſhe is enraged againſt my poor Child; though, as ſhe herſelf tells the Story, I think it rather againſt her. But I am accuſed of partiality in your favour; ſurely they need not deny me my partiality—Alas! I can only aſſiſt you with my impotent wiſhes.

"But I would ſtrengthen your mind, my Beloved, to enable you to bear a ſtroke inevitable. How can I liſten to your arguments againſt it, when on your compliance

pliance depends the welfare and honour of our houſe? Freely would I embrace Poverty, and all its concomitant evils, but I know not how to ſupport Infamy. — Conſider, I am wounded in the tendereſt part, through the ſides of my Huſband. Lord *Cleveland*'s attachment to you ſuperſedes all other concerns. He dies for you; I hope his gratitude will induce him to pay all that fond attention, which may ſoften your deſtiny, and make you leſs diſſatisfied with your portion in this life. Your conſolation is, my Beloved, that with this life your troubles will ceaſe.

"You may imagine, that it is impoſſible to be happy with any other man than him whom your heart has choſen; you may likewiſe think that with him you muſt unqueſtionably be ſo.—Ah! my *Emma!* I thought ſo too; but I have found it otherwiſe. Men appear in very different lights in the day of courtſhip. All compliance to our little caprices, all ſweetneſs, all love and tenderneſs; but when the intimacy of marriage renders them familiar, too often they caſt off all theſe pleaſing *agremens*, and become totally the reverſe. We may vainly flatter ourſelves while in our maiden ſtate, that we can put up with any thing in the man we love; but a heart that truly loves cannot ſo eaſily bear thoſe ſlights and neglects which are too frequently offered;

offered; we ſigh in ſecret, and pine in anguiſh.

"It is a certain truth, that the attachments of women encreaſe from the time that the men's leſſen. The reaſon is this, Gratitude is the main principle in the breaſt of a woman; it is the foundation and preſerver of love in our hearts. We look up to the men for protection, they afford it us; they do more; they flatter us for diſtinguiſhing them; they raiſe our opinion of ourſelves; we are charmed with their condeſcenſion, in preferring our converſation, trifling as it is held to be, to the ſociety of all others; our Gratitude is painful till we can make a ſuitable return; we repay them with our tendereſt Affection. Would I could ſay we are never deceived in them! But we muſt bear it as well as we are able, and make our own breaſts our *Confidantes* and ſecret-keepers.

"Were it allowed me, my greateſt joy would be to forward the union you ſo ardently wiſh for; but as I know this marriage with Lord *Cleveland* muſt take place, I would endeavour to arm you againſt the time.

"His impetuoſity, and the exceſs of his paſſion, make him impatient of the coldneſs which appears on your ſide. You will not allow him the leaſt merit, I doubt, from ſuch inſtances of his affection. Love, however,

however, ſhews itſelf differently in different perſons; nay, ſometimes wears a contrary appearance in the ſame boſom. I hope he loves you; if he does ſincerely, his behaviour, I pray God, may induce you to reſpect him. Your happineſs, my ever dear *Emma*, is dearer to me than my own. I would forfeit all my hopes in this world to ſecure yours. But think, my Love, what obligations you will confer on all your family; think, that we are all bound to do you obedience, as the Brothers of *Joſeph* paid to him; you ſave us from more than famine, you preſerve our honour.

" You are not inſenſible of the heart-felt ſatisfaction of conferring benefits. You have all your life practiſed it. How often have you relinquiſhed pleaſure to gratify your Brother or Siſters; yourſelf was always the laſt perſon thought of. Could my *Emma*, then, but forget herſelf in this inſtance; could ſhe but chearfully approach the Altar, how great a weight of woe would ſhe take off her Mother's heart? To ſee ſmiles reſtored to her Father's brow, and peace to his boſom; to hear him breathe out his acknowledgments as he preſſed her to his breaſt; ah! would not this be a recompence? Oh! my *Emma*, can you be inexorable? Can you be deaf to our intreaties? No; my Child will conſent; ſhe will make this one, this only ſacrifice,

and

and reſtore that calm to a Mother's mind, which this event has driven thence. Adieu, my lovely Child! I write this while your Father is ſleeping. I dare not proceed farther, leſt he ſhould awake, and diſcover my employment — Yet if he ſhould ſee it, would he think I was endeavouring to *harden your heart?* Surely not. I ſtrive to reconcile you to a deſtiny as fixed and irrevocable as death or fate. Again, my Beloved, my Darling, adieu. My arms ach to ſtrain you to the tender boſom of,

Your ever affectionate Mother,

C. WOODVILLE."

My Mother's tender letter overwhelmed my ſoul with grief; I looked for conſolation, but found only deſpair. My Mother pointed out my miſery; but, alas! the remedy was no where to be diſcovered. My heart (hard as my Father thought it was) was not proof againſt the diſtreſſes of my Family. The ſevereſt torture that the ingenuity of a *Spaniſh* Inquiſitor could invent, my firm heart ſhould have endured to have preſerved my fidelity unſhaken. But here were cords to pull it e'en to burſting. No ſubterfuge ſeemed left for me, but one, and that my piety, my religion forbad; like *Arpaſia*, I reſolved to *live, and dare to be unhappy.*

I took my pen to write to my Mother; my tears obliterated each line. Two hours had elapſed, yet ſtill I was incapable of tracing the ſad purpoſes of my ſoul. Alas! I hardly knew myſelf what they were. A Servant came to acquaint me breakfaſt waited — I ſtarted at the ſound: Unwilling to diſcover myſelf before a Domeſtick, I concealed my diſtreſs — "I will come, (anſwered I;) but if poſſible contrive to ſend *Fanny* to me." — The dear Girl tripped lightly up the ſtairs. She flew into my arms, "Come down, my dear *Emma*, (ſaid ſhe,) my Papa will not take notice of your *fracas* with Siſter *Clara*; he will not receive you with anger." — "To what is this change owing, my *Fanny?*" — "To the interpoſition of Lord *Cleveland*; he has inſiſted on your being permitted to attend or retire from the Company when you pleaſe, and that you are treated with leſs rigour." — "I am much obliged to him for his conſideration, when it is owing to him alone I am not the happieſt Creature in the world. But let them have nothing on our part to condemn. Let us, my Love, go down, though, I ſuppoſe, we muſt not go down together." — "Alas, my dear Siſter, (ſaid *Fanny*,) you do not ſeem as if you were able to ſet one foot before the other; you are as pale as aſhes — Oh, *Emma*, *Emma!* how has a few hours grief altered you. But I muſt

not

not ſtay to indulge my concern. Come down, my ſweet Siſter, as ſoon as you can."

As *Fanny* ſaid, I was hardly able to creep down the ſtairs, ſupporting myſelf by the banniſters all the way; I trembled to ſo great a degree, through exceſs of grief and weakneſs, that I had like to have fallen when I made a curt'ſy at entering the room. I dared not truſt myſelf to look at my Mother, who ſat at the tea-table. No one ſpoke to me on my coming in but Lord *Cleveland*; he paid me the compliment of the morning. I bowed my head, but could not raiſe a word. I ſupported myſelf by the backs of the chairs till I had reached my ſeat. My Mother gently ſtole her hand under the table, and preſſed mine as it lay in my lap. Her attention to me affected me very much. When ſhe put the tea-cup into my hand, it ſhook ſo much I thought it would drop out of my hand. "Put it down, my Love, (ſaid my Mother,) ſet it down, my Dear, and compoſe yourſelf."—I caſt my eyes round the table, to examine the different countenances of the Company: In my Father's there was a ſteady contraction of the muſcles, and an uneaſy anxious obſervance of Lord *Cleveland* and me. In my Mother's there were the ſtrongeſt marks of grief, chaſtiſed by fear. In my Siſter's brow ſat peeviſh Envy and exulting Triumph, at ſeeing the *proud Beauty* humbled

in the duſt. *James*'s mouth was drawn up into a haughty ſneer, not deigning to caſt a ſtrait glance on the Company. The muſcles of my dear *Fanny*'s face were working; ſhe looked as if ſhe had the greateſt difficulty to reſtrain her tears, ſtealing a look now and then at me; ſometimes, when ſhe dared, at *James* or *Clara*, then at Lord *Cleveland*, as her ſweet eyes could venture. Lord *Cleveland* I had but one ſlight look at. He ſeemed diſſatisfied, yet more attentive and civil than the day before. I felt a gleam of comfort ariſe in my breaſt on the occaſion: I thought, could I addreſs him by himſelf, I might prevail on him to releaſe my Father from the proſecution, without conſtraining me to be the ſacrifice. I intended to bind myſelf never to marry Mr. *Courtenay*, or any other Man, without his conſent. I judged that my faithful *Edward* would feel leſs affliction infinitely, at loſing all hopes of marrying me, if no other received thoſe vows due to him alone; and to ſave him pain was all my joy and all my hope. If (ſaid I to myſelf,) Lord *Cleveland*'s paſſion is not actuated by the baſeſt of all principles, he can never receive pleaſure from an union with one whoſe heart is devoted to another. He may have generoſity; at leaſt I will make the effort — The civility of his behaviour inſpired theſe hopes. I revolved them in my mind; I anticipated the happineſs I

ſhould

ſhould enjoy; my flattering wiſhes gave a brightneſs to my countenance; I felt my cheeks mantle with the bluſh of expectation.

When breakfaſt was ended, I found my Mother and Siſters were preparing to quit the room—I roſe—"Stay, *Emma*, (ſaid my Father,) Lord *Cleveland* is deſirous of having ſome converſation with you." I retook my ſeat. My Brother next walked out, and then my Father; now, thought I, an opportunity preſents itſelf, I will, if poſſible, aſſume courage to ſpeak to his Lordſhip, and heaven proſper me!

Lord *Cleveland* began a long ſpeech, of unmeaning profeſſions, and unwelcome compliments, on my charms, &c. I cut him ſhort, by ſaying, "I wiſhed not to hear ſuch encomiums on my perſon; that I ſhould never ceaſe to think myſelf unfortunate, in creating a paſſion in his Lordſhip's breaſt, ſince I could make no return, wherein the heart had any concern, as that had been unalterably fixed before I had the leaſt notion of his intentions in my favour."—I was proceeding, when my Father entered with an angry countenance: "Perverſe Girl! (ſaid he,) will you for ever abuſe my indulgence?—Do not, my Lord, attend to her flimſy and romantic ſcruples; her head is abſolutely turned by the curſed nonſenſe ſhe has read in Novels. To theſe fine ſentimental geniuſſes every trifling occurrence in

life is an adventure. Their high-flown imaginations are ſhocked at the ordinary addreſſes of men—Would but your Lordſhip ſcale my garden wall, kill my maſtiff, and aſſiſt her in jumping out of a window, and breaking the hearts of her Parents, all would go very right; no objections would then ariſe: But theſe plain doings, theſe rent-roll and parchment weddings, are quite out of the way with theſe modern heroines."

Ah! my *Louiſa!* how was I to bear theſe ſcornful reproaches? Yet I dared not ſay one word, could I have had power to articulate a ſentence. But terror and diſappointment ſealed my lips. My Father would no longer give me the chance of winning over Lord *Cleveland*—My God! and what chance had I of ſucceeding with him? I have ſaid my Father was ambitious to a great degree; he would not have been ſo ſatisfied, even if his former wiſhes had been ſucceſsful; that is, had Lord *Cleveland* releaſed him in an honourable manner, and fixed my Brother's ſettlement, he would not, I ſay, have felt himſelf ſo ſatisfied as in the proſpect of having an Earl for his ſon-in-law; therefore, you ſee, an objection would have remained on his ſide, even if I could have obviated all others. Little chance, indeed, ſhould I have had with his Lordſhip, for his love was become ſo violent, that my Father ventured to tell him, he would not accept of his bounty unleſs

unleſs he married his Daughter. I can hardly think it poſſible a Father could ſo cruelly condemn his Daughter to certain miſery, unleſs he had been ſtrongly wrought on. My inhuman Brother was certainly at the bottom of this, equally on account of his diſlike to Mr. *Courtenay*, to whom he could form no reaſon, but that he was dear to me, and likewiſe to forward his own ambitious ſchemes with Lady *Bell Haſtings*, who, it may be preſumed, would have leſs reluctance to come into our family, after an Earl had allied himſelf to it; therefore, you ſee, it was neceſſary a victim ſhould be offered, and I was judged fitteſt to be that victim. I was conſtrained to ſeem to liſten to the tender diſcourſes of Lord *Cleveland*; however, I lent him a patient ear. There was no occaſion for my anſwering queſtions, which were as much applied to my Father as me. In this miſerable ſtate I was kept two hours, and then was permitted to retire.

I am rather premature in acquainting you with my Father's reſolution, on the conviction of the extent of Lord *Cleveland's* paſſion for me, ſince I knew it not 'till ſome days after; if I had, I might have ſpared myſelf the pains of making the application. However ſanguine in the hope of ſucceſs, I wrote a Letter to Lord *Cleveland*, which at night I conveyed, by the hand of my good little *Fanny*, into his room. It ran thus:

"*My* LORD,

"AWED by the preſence of my Father, I was prevented laying before you the true ſtate of my heart. What miſery that heart has endured ſince your declaration in my favour, the extreme alteration of my features but too truly indicate.

"My Lord, when you arrived here, the ſun ſhone not on a more happy young woman; happy in her family's affection; happy in her proſpects of future felicity. Alas! now how changed is the ſcene! Can your Lordſhip really love me? If ſo, how different does that paſſion actuate different minds. I love, my Lord; I have the courage to avow it; nor am I too bold in my avowal; ſince but a week ago my attachment was authorized by my Father, and in a few weeks hence would have been ſanctified by marriage. Yet, my Lord, I would not ſeek the diſadvantage of the man I profeſs to eſteem above all others; I would not take advantage of a diſtreſſed family, to plunge the object of my affection in endleſs miſery; I would not do all this, and a thouſand other things, to prove my love—But thus you do. Oh! Lord *Cleveland*, what happineſs do you promiſe yourſelf from this fatal marriage? Union I will not call it, for there can be none between us.—If you ſtill perſiſt in your cruel purpoſe, I know of no remedy, I muſt become your wretched wife. It remains then in your own

own breaſt to raiſe me to endleſs happineſs, or ſink me to eternal miſery.

" If compaſſion ſhould touch your breaſt for one of the moſt forlorn of her ſex, I will bind myſelf, by the ſtrongeſt vows, never to become the Wife of any Man. With joy will I live in eternal celibacy—Nay, will ſeclude myſelf for ever from all ſociety; any, the moſt rigorous laws you can impoſe I will chearfully ſubmit to, rather than take a falſe oath in the preſence of God. Oh! my Lord! ſpare me the wounds my conſcience would receive, if at the Altar I am conſtrained to vow love and honour to you, while my ſoul, and all its affections, are devoted to another.—In pity to me, in pity to yourſelf, relinquiſh the cruel purpoſe of forcing me to become your wife. Never ſhall I ceaſe lifting up my ſoul in prayer for your happineſs, if you grant my petition. I aſk but to paſs a ſingle life; I can forego happineſs; but, oh! I cannot embrace miſery. Pardon me, my Lord, I intreat you, if I have expreſſed myſelf with an undue warmth—but think what I have at ſtake, my eternal, my everlaſting happineſs.

" In the bleſſed hope that your Lordſhip will be convinced that a marriage with me will be productive of endleſs diſquiet to yourſelf, and that I ſhall receive no more perſecutions on your account, I ſubſcribe myſelf,

" My Lord, your Lordſhip's ever grateful,

EMMA WOODVILLE."

That night I enjoyed a little repoſe, from the eaſe I had given my heart, by the ſtep I had purſued. But the next morning too fatally convinced me of the fallacy of my hopes, of touching the heart of Lord *Cleveland* with compaſſion. He made a moſt barbarous uſe of my Letter. Permit me, *Louiſa*, though he is your relation, to call his conduct barbarous in the higheſt degree.

At breakfaſt he told my Father, "It was in vain for him any longer to amuſe himſelf with the hope of gaining my heart, for that I was reſolutely bent on running any riſk rather than become his Wife." My heart beat ſo violently I thought it would have burſt; yet I knew not whether I ſhould attribute it to joy or fear. My Father ſoon made that no longer a matter of doubt. "My Lord, (ſaid he) I cannot anſwer for the perverſity of a woman's heart, therefore cannot venture to aſſure you, that you may poſſeſs that of the moſt obſtinate and headſtrong girl in the world; but as to her hand, I here bind myſelf, by the moſt ſolemn oath, (which, my Dear, is too ſhocking for me to repeat,) that her hand ſhall be yours; by all the power and authority that God and Man has given me over her, I will drag her to the Altar."

Think, *Louiſa*, what were my feelings at that horrid moment! "Hear me, thou undutiful wretch, (cried my Father) hear me, thou,

thou, who canſt bear to ſee thy family ſinking in ruin, and yet refuſeſt thy voice to ſave it—Mark my words, and tremble at their purpoſe."

The violence of his expreſſions, his looks and threats, were too much for feeble nature to ſupport. A faint ſickiſhneſs came over me, and I ſunk into a ſtate of total inſenſibility. I remained a long time in this envied forgetfulneſs of the world, and all its troubles. When I came to myſelf, I found I was laid on my bed, and a ſervant of my mother's in my room. I lay a conſiderable time before I recovered the full uſe of my ſenſes, ſtupidly looking about, but without ſpeaking. After a while I ſpoke to the maid, and aſked for my mother. She ſaid ſhe was in her chamber. I then recollected I muſt not ſee her; and fetching a deep ſigh, I bid her draw the curtains, and leave me to myſelf. It is impoſſible to tell you the anguiſh I endured, the bitter reflections I made on my cruel deſtiny, and the many tears I ſhed. "Witneſs for me! (cried I aloud, and ſtarting from the bed, lifting up my wretched hands to Heaven,) witneſs for me, thou who ſeeſt all hearts, what agonies I have endured to preſerve my fidelity to my *Edward!* Impute not, O Lord! to me the evil that may enſue from the violent meaſures which are uſed to ſever two faithful hearts. Strengthen, I beſeech thee, the heart of my

Courteney; teach him to bear my loſs with fortitude; and, oh! may he never know what anguiſh now rends my ſoul; he then may recover that peace of mind which I have loſt for ever. To ſave a ſinking family, I offer myſelf a victim at thy Altar, and, oh! may thy mercy ſtrike me dead when I have given my hand." My ſtrength failed me, I ſunk on my knees by the bed ſide; I leaned over it, and poured forth my ſoul in prayer for ſome time; I roſe, ſtrengthened both in mind and body. I no longer made an oppoſition in my own mind to the oppreſſions that were heaped on me. I became calm—in ſhort, the agitation of my ſpirits had deprived me of the power of ſenſe—weakneſs alone had blunted the arrow of Adverſity. It was not ſo much a ſtate of calmneſs as ſtupidity. I rang my bell—my *Fanny* came. "Thank God! thank God! (cried ſhe, claſping her hands, and then running to me, and throwing her arms round my neck,) thank God! my Siſter is recovered! Oh! my *Emma*, what have I not ſuffered on your account!" "I thank you, my Love, (ſaid I, returning her embrace) I thank you for all your ſufferings, but it is unjuſt you ſhould endure any more for one who has left off ſorrowing, on her own account. I am now reſigned, my dear *Fanny*; I can meet the ſtroke without ſhrinking back. While my ſoul could flatter itſelf,

itſelf, I indulged a ſecret hope, but that is over. Deſpair has now poſſeſſed the place of all the more delicate ſenſations, and I no longer ſtruggle againſt the ſtern, the harſh decrees of a Father." *Fanny* fixed her eyes ſtedfaſtly on me for ſome minutes without ſpeaking, then turning her head aſide, her labouring heart guſhed out in tears. "Why do you weep my *Fanny?* (aſked I, with tender concern,) my tears are all exhauſted, and in the frame of mind I now am, I think I could ſee the wreck of the world, and all its inhabitants periſhing without a tear or ſigh."

"'Tis that, 'tis that, (ſobbed *Fanny*) that makes we weep; oh! *Emma*, that mournful ſettled look of yours diſtracts me. Oh! that your eyes could run over like mine, to waſh away that fell deſpair which ſeems to have taken hold of you. Conſider, my deareſt *Emma*, we muſt bear the evils of life—I tremble for you."

"I am but too well convinced that we muſt bear the evils which are inflicted on us: I am determined to ſupport my part, dreadful as it is. And now, *Fanny*, I will depute you to go to my Father, and tell him, I no longer ſeek to oppoſe his will; he may diſpoſe of me as he pleaſes; the world, and all its concerns, are now indifferent to me. I have looked round on every ſide for comfort, I have found none: I have looked

forward

forward for hope, but in the wide proſpect before me I can ſee nothing but deſpair; I no longer war againſt my deſtiny: It is inevitable, and I ſubmit. Go then, my *Fanny*, and make known this alteration in my ſentiments."

"I dare not leave you alone (ſaid ſhe;) the mournful caſt of your countenance, and the deep ſolemnity of your words, terrify me beyond all human conception. Excuſe me, I cannot leave you, unleſs you will permit me to ring the bell for your Maid."

"And can you think I am ſo wholly forſaken of God as to fear I ſhould ruſh into his preſence unſummoned? No, my *Fanny*, tho' I ſo calmly conſign my mortal part to endleſs miſery, I have a regard to my ſoul. Heaven will not impute to me the ſin of taking a falſe oath in its preſence. It knows how I am conſtrained. There will then be no hazard in leaving me. Think not I would deceive you. I promiſe you moſt faithfully, that my life, deplorable as its ſtate muſt be, I will endeavour to preſerve." Thus aſſured, ſhe left me. She preſently returned, with the requeſt of my Father, that I would come down into the Parlour if I was able, or elſe the family would meet me in my Mother's dreſſing-room. I choſe the latter. With difficulty I reached it. My Mother was not there. I had indulged the hope of ſeeing her firſt.

My

My Father approached me, and aſked me, "Whether I had commiſſioned my Siſter *Fanny* to ſpeak the truth? Do not deceive me, (continued he,) did you mean what you ſaid?" I bowed, but was too weak to ſpeak. "Then you are again my Child, (cried he, and claſped me to his boſom, and kiſſing my cheek,) then, do I again embrace my *Emma*." This ſudden change was almoſt more than my harraſſed ſoul could ſupport. I thought I ſhould again have fainted. "My Lord *Cleveland*, (ſaid my Father,) take the hand of your deſtined Wife. Receive her, ſhe is yours." What, but a total privation of ſenſe, could ſupport me through this ſcene? I neither ſighed, nor ſhed one tear; Nature ſeemed to be exhauſted by the conflict, and I only breathed to evince my exiſtence. Lord *Cleveland* took my paſſive hand from my Father, and lifted it to his lips. I received the thanks of my Brother and Siſter; they jointly begged that a mutual amneſty ſhould paſs between us. I promiſed them I would ceaſe to remember what had paſſed. I then, in a voice hardly articulate, aſked to ſee my Mother. "Can you ſupport her tenderneſs?" (ſaid my Father.) "Yes; Sir, (I anſwered,) nothing can affect me." My Mother folded me in her arms, "Oh! my Child! my *Emma!* am I then permitted to embrace thee?" I returned her careſſes.

careſſes. She ſeemed hardly able to give credit to her eyes and ears. "Is it poſſible!" ſhe exclaimed many times. "Can this be real! To what bleſſed change is this owing?"

"Examine not too cloſe, my dear Madam, (ſaid I;) you ſee me calm; but probe not my ſoul with queſtions, leſt you again raiſe emotions which now ſeem ſubſided. I cannot anſwer for what further changes may enſue." My Mother ſighed, and wiped away a tear.

"You have now, in our preſence, given your hand to Lord *Cleveland*, (ſaid my Father,) by which is implied your ſolemn promiſe to be his. You meant ſo *Emma*." —"I did," cried I, faintly. "Then you can have no objection to this buſineſs being forwarded as faſt as poſſible."

"I can only anſwer for the preſent moment, (I replied;) ſince there is no way left me to avoid my fate, I would gladly have it over."

"Say then, my lovely Charmer, (cried Lord *Cleveland*, preſſing my hand,) ſay then, when you will pronounce me happy?" —"If the poſſeſſion of that hand alone, can make you happy, let it be ſoon; that is all the favour I beg; to-night — to-morrow — give me not time for reflection." My Lord left the room inſtantly, and diſpatched an expreſs for a licence. My family

mily all hung about me, expreſſing their obligations to me for reſtoring peace to their hearts, and affluence to their houſe. I know not in what manner I received or anſwered their acknowledgements. I certainly was not clear in my head. And who can wonder at the mind being weakened which had received ſuch ſhocks. That night my careful Mother never left me. She made me take a compoſing draught to lull my ſorrows, and compoſe my head. The next morning there was a wildneſs in my looks, and a hurrying way of ſpeaking, which alarmed her very much. I ſuffered myſelf to be dreſſed for the ceremony without the leaſt oppoſition on my part. Alas! what did it ſignify? I uttered not a complaint; ſilence ſat on my lips; but there was a tempeſt within that baffles all deſcription.

I was conveyed into the coach, more dead than alive. I had not power to ſtand without ſupport. During the fatal Ceremony, (which bound me to miſery, and for ever, in this world, ſeparated me from what alone could make life deſirable,) I was ſcarcely ſenſible. A whirl of thoughts ran through my head, and the confuſion of it can never be expreſſed. Ah! what are the terrors of death, if they exceed what I then felt? It is impoſſible death can ever give greater pains:

" For

"For if it be
The pangs, the throes, the agonizing ſtruggle,
When ſoul and body part, ſure I have felt it,
And there's no more to fear."

But what became of me when Lord *Cleveland* threw his arm round me, and ſaluted me as his Wife! My ſoul ſickened at the ſound, and fainted within me. A ſeries of ſwoonings ſucceeded; I know not how I was got home. I found myſelf on a ſofa, my Mother ſupporting me in her arms. The firſt thing which ſtruck my view, was the Ring, ſad emblem of my misfortunes! "What have I done! what have I done! (I cried in a frantic accent, and wringing my hands;) I have parted with my peace for ever! Oh! I am wretched for ever!" — "Peace, my Child, (ſaid my Mother,) your duty now calls on you to ſuppreſs all the emotions which the buſineſs of the day has rendered unlawful. You have vowed before the Lord, in his Temple, and ſhall not that Vow be heard? Already is it enrolled in the volumes of Fate. You are now the Wife of Lord *Cleveland*, and you well know that ſtate urges you to Obedience and Love. You muſt now forget every thing which interferes with your duty. It is in your power alone to make your Marriage happy, or otherwiſe. Your virtue, my Love, muſt ſecure you from all improper affections; and may the merciful

Father

Father of Heaven make you happy in the lot you have been conſtrained to draw!"

My mind was too much diſturbed to attend to the converſation of my Mother. All ſociety was painful; I begged her to leave me. When I was alone, I gave a free indulgence to all my ſad thoughts. — And have I, then, left you for ever? (cried I, burſting into tears.) Have I really given you up, and wedded another? Ah! then, what a wretch am I? What will be your ſufferings? Yet, if I can, let me mitigate them. Should he think me falſe, through my Sex's proneneſs to change, he will no longer eſteem me; he will, in time, ceaſe to love me. Ah! to what a pitiable ſtate am I reduced, that I ſhould wiſh to be no longer loved by him, for whom I would freely die!

My Mother came to me; I informed her of my intention to write to him. — "Never, for God's ſake, (ſaid ſhe,) never let *him* know; never uſe his name, — you will render yourſelf criminal by pronouncing it. Let him think you was inconſtant, and dazzled with the ſplendour of a Title; let him imagine you unworthy of his love; let him forget you; and may the Almighty grant you may forget him, ſince the thinking of him is incompatible with your duty!" — "Fear not, my dear Madam; your Daughter's ill fortune and diſ-

diſtreſſes ſhall never call a bluſh on your cheek; the Law of God ſhall ever be the rule of my conſcience, and my conſcience ſhall ever be a check on the actions of my life. I am unhappy, I fear I muſt ever be ſo; but I will have this conſolation, a heart free from ill doing. My Virtue and Religion ſhall ſupport me, and enable me to bear an exiſtence painful to me! On me, you ſay, depends my happineſs or miſery; alas! it now depends on another. Lord *Cleveland* knows too well, my heart has been long devoted to another; he will be jealous, be ſuſpicious; but do you, my dear Mother, take ſome opportunity of aſſuring him, that my Virtue may be my ſecurity; that I am as truly his, as if my heart had never known another attachment; and that it ſhall be my conſtant endeavour to make him forget I ever was averſe to being his Wife."

Perhaps, my Dear, you will think I had not yet recovered the uſe of my reaſon; but it was too late to ſtruggle; I was become a Wife. It was my duty, my intereſt, to bear my hard lot without complaining. I knew the ſight of the man, I had given up for ever, would render me miſerable; therefore I ardently wiſhed never to ſee him. I never have; and Heaven grant I never may! I have, never ſince my total ſeparation from him, pronounced his name, nor ever, till this

this recital of my misfortunes, mentioned or traced his name with my pen. But, ah! it is written in indelible characters in my heart, and I have oft ſtriven in vain to drive it from my remembrance. You are the firſt from whom I have received intelligence concerning him.—Oh! *Louiſa!* what has not this fatal attachment coſt me! But I run into reflections inſtead of reciting facts.

I believe my Mother made a faithful relation to Lord *Cleveland* of what I had ſaid. There was a tenderneſs in his manner which he never aſſumed before. I remarked it—my Mother pointed it out to me.—But, ah! my *Louiſa*, his love—oh! how ſhall I expreſs to you how ungrateful to my ſoul were the inſtances of his love.

I intreated him to carry me to *Cleveland-Place*. I could not bear to be in a place which had been the ſcene of the greateſt happineſs and miſery which the human heart can experience. On the ſecond day we ſet off for this houſe. Here have I worn three years away unbleſſing and unbleſt. Lord *Cleveland*'s temper is not formed to conciliate the heart; you have ſeen ſome proofs that it is not. I have ſtrove, I daily ſtrive, to ſee him in the moſt favourable light, more particularly ſince I have become a Mother by him. I wiſh to feel for him, a part of that affection I feel for his Child. Why will he, by a thouſand little nameleſs

foibles

foibles and imperfections, render my taſk impracticable? My ſoul is gentle, and, tho' it is utterly impoſſible it ever ſhould love another object, yet it might have been ſo far won over to his ſide, to have looked up to him with gratitude. I might have eſteemed him as a friend in whom I could truſt. But there is ſuch a diſſimilarity of ſentiment between us, that a mutual paſſion is not in nature to expect. I have, however, I can with the ſtricteſt truth aſſert, I have ever paid him the moſt inviolable attention. I have been ſtudious to pleaſe him, yet I do not ſucceed. He knew the ſtate of my heart, yet, he ſays, he is convinced of its rectitude and virtue. He ſays he places an unlimited confidence in me, and I never will abuſe it.

But to return to my Family:—My Brother ſoon became the Huſband of Lady *Bell Haſtings*.—His ambition was gratified, but not his happineſs ſecured. Her temper is too ſimilar to his own to admit of felicity in their union. We have very little intercourſe with them.—My Siſter *Clara* is married, I doubt very unhappily;—yet her's was a match of love. Her Huſband is an Officer in the Guards, but of very ſmall fortune, and ſtill more indifferent morals and character. My dear little *Fanny* lives at home with my Father and Mother, and will be a laſting honour and comfort to them.

You

You have now before you, my dear Lady *Louiſa*, an Apology, I may ſay, for my conduct.—If you have gone along with me in the recital, I doubt not you have felt ſome ſorrow. I do not wiſh—ah! why do I expreſs myſelf thus languid?—I beg, I intreat you not to allow your unfortunate gueſt to peruſe this. More tenderneſs appears in it, than the Wife of Lord *Cleveland* ſhould expreſs for one, who is not, never can be any thing to her. In pity to me, in pity to your friend, do not diſcloſe this ſad ſtory to him. Ah! *Louiſa!* my wounds bleed afreſh. Would to Heaven I had never heard of him! Time and my unwearied efforts had a little blunted the poignancy of my griefs, this recital has ſharpened every ſting, and I feel his ſufferings again. Oh, *Louiſa!* according to the common courſe of nature, how many years of anguiſh may I not endure—old as I am in affliction, I am yet very young in age—I am not yet twenty-one—and but three wretched years have yet worn themſelves away.

My dear, I depend on your diſcretion; I have laid my heart before you; I could not bear to be hardly thought of by you, but now beg that you treaſure up my ſtory in your own boſom, and ſometimes remember your unhappy

EMMA CLEVELAND.

LET-

LETTER XX.

To Lady CLEVELAND.

REMEMBER thee! Yes, I will remember thee. I'll wipe from my memory all fond records elſe, and thou alone ſhalt fill my ſoul. Oh! my excellent Lady *Cleveland*, can you forgive my expreſſions? Yet, if you can, how ſhall I forgive myſelf? But pity for the diſtreſs of the moſt amiable man in the world urged me to condemn you. How apt are we to judge from the outward face of things. Your hapleſs ſtory will teach me another leſſon. I ſhall be cautious for the future how I paſs a raſh cenſure.

But I have another petition to make to you, I truſt to your goodneſs for forgiveneſs. I could not bear any one ſhould think you deſerved the cruel epithets of *falſe* and *ungrateful*; nay, the tears I ſhed over your melancholy ſtory too plainly told the cauſe. It was known I had received Letters from *Cleveland-Place*. My diſtreſs was viſible. Mr. *Courtenay* begged to know the ſource of my concern; I owned it was cauſed from your Letters. "You have been deceived, (ſaid I,) Lady *Cleveland* is much to be pitied."—"Is ſhe ſo? (he aſked eagerly;) and will you not, my dear Lady *Louiſa*, tell me why? I know I am

wrong

wrong to indulge myſelf with any circumſtances that encreaſe my misfortune, yet I cannot avoid the inquiries, which the certainty of your knowing ſomething of that once-loved woman's hiſtory, excites in me. I own I wiſh her not to be below my eſteem; one's ſelf-love is wounded by the reflection, that thoſe whom we cannot ceaſe to love are unworthy our ſmalleſt eſtimation."—"But will not the perfect knowledge of her ſufferings pierce your heart with keen anguiſh?"—"It may, it may; but yet my curioſity ſuperſedes all other conſiderations. I cannot be ſunk lower in miſery than I am already plunged. My grief may take a new turn: I may receive conſolation in finding her leſs faulty than appearances repreſent her."—"Then take theſe Papers. Retire to your own room; witneſſes, I doubt, would diſtreſs you. The heart, though wholly unacquainted with the lovely Writer, which is unmoved at her ſad ſtory, muſt be a ſavage one."

You will blame me, my dear Lady *Cleveland*, but I could not refuſe him. Oh! how my heart ſwells at the conduct of Lord *Cleveland*. I diſclaim all kindred with him. How could he reſiſt your Letter? He knows not what Love means. His paſſion was impious to the higheſt degree. And muſt ſuch a man render my Friend miſerable for ever? How hard is Fate. I ceaſe

not from the beginning to be angry at your Brother—I will not call him ſo—that *James Woodville, with his fine Lady Bell*, as the ſweet *Fanny* ſays. You muſt bring me acquainted with that dear Girl; I long to embrace her, and thank her for her tenderneſs to you.

Lord *Stretton* has riſen highly in my eſteem, on occaſion of the intereſt he has taken in your Story. We mingled our tears together. I have not ſeen our poor Friend ſince I gave him your Papers, which was laſt night. I ſent to him this morning, he begged our excuſe of his attendance at breakfaſt. Ah! what will he feel while his heart bleeds in every line? Will not all his griefs be renewed? Alas! I fear this recital will prey on your mind too much—It muſt awaken thoſe emotions, which time had lulled, not deſtroyed. Oh! good God! what evils, what endleſs evils are produced from Love! Why are we anxious to fall into its ſnares? Am I not morally certain of a more felicitous chance in marrying a man I eſteem, than if I felt all that fervency of attachment, which is ſo often the ſource of "exquiſite pain?" Ever, ever may my breaſt be a ſtranger to its joys, ſince its anxieties and diſquiets ſo over-balance them!

I own I did begin to experience ſome of its alarms; I found myſelf inſenſibly growing

growing partial to *Conway*, but for the ill-fated *Courtenay* I feel only pity. Enough I know of the paſſion to guard my heart for the future. I became penſive, and oftentimes melancholy. When the idea of Lord *Stretton* obtruded itſelf, I could not drive it away, as I formerly boaſted, with any trifle; no, it returned, after every effort, more painful. I dreaded the time of his arrival. I pictured him in my mind diſagreeable, haughty, and of a diſpoſition not to be loved: In ſhort, I fancied I ſhould find him the reverſe of *Conway*, and that thought contributed to my inquietude. Thank Heaven, Lord *Stretton* made himſelf known juſt in time to ſave me from plunging myſelf in endleſs miſery; for ſuch I ſhould have been involved in, had not my partiality received this ſudden check. My uneaſineſs, however, would not have been ſo great, but for the ſelf-condemnation I loaded myſelf with. I even upbraided myſelf of a breach of contract. I had engaged, in my own mind, (the ſame with me as if I had had a thouſand witneſſes,) that my heart ſhould accompany my hand in my union with my Father's choice. And indeed ſo it ought, otherwiſe my being annexed to the eſtate was rather hanging a dead weight upon it, as that was to be his whether I conſented or not.

I left my Letter open, in hopes I might have found ſomething to communicate to your Ladyſhip worth your notice. I am ſorry that I muſt tell you poor *Courtenay* is much indiſpoſed. No wonder! Lord *Stretton* (I revere him more and more) pays the ſtricteſt attention to him. He ſlept not laſt night; however, I hope his affliction will ſubſide. There is a happy facility interwoven in the human frame, that we in time ſubmit patiently to evils for which there is no remedy. Time is the *Paraclete* which affords us conſolation, or rather blunts the edge of ſorrow. Oh! may ſome ſuch friendly hand interpoſe to heal the wounds of diſunited hearts. I could ſit and form wiſhes, but I had better not; they would only ſoften you too much. Yet I will hazard one: I wiſh I could have concealed your affecting Story from *Courtenay*. I doubt I have contributed to fill his breaſt with anguiſh, and rob his nights of ſoft repoſe.

Believe me, my ever dear *Emma*,

Yours moſt faithfully,

LOUISA STRETTON.

LET-

LETTER XXI.

To Lady LOUISA STRETTON.

ALAS! my *Louiſa!* and is he much indiſpoſed? I tremble, I die with expectation of hearing of him. Eaſe my heart, for Heaven's ſake! Eaſe my heart, did I ſay? No, *Louiſa*, that it can never know. It melts at the diſtreſs of *Courtenay*, more than ever it melts at thoſe of your *Emma*. Why did I indulge my pen with the fatal recital? Why did I renew both his griefs and my own? And could he ſtill love me, though he thought me *falſe* and *ungrateful?*—Your Letter lies before me—I peruſe it a thouſand and a thouſand times.

In your next Letter, too, you write his name—Ah! what emotion I then felt. It was the firſt time I had ſeen it written ſince my woes commenced.

"Oh! name for ever ſad, for ever dear,
Still breath'd in ſighs, ſtill uſher'd with a tear."

Write to me, I beg, I intreat you; tell me all; let me know the worſt. What is there in nature to expect worſe than I have experienced? Torn, divided from myſelf, loſt to all the ſocial joys of life, buried in the early part of my life, and doomed to endleſs inquietude. Yet bear thyſelf up, my heart, ſuſtain the diſcomforts which are

laid on thee with an iron hand, and receive this conſolation, that thy griefs are mortal while thy reward will be permanent and eternal.

Oh! my dear *Louiſa!* how happy ſhould I be to lay my head down on my pillow, and forget all my ſorrows in the grave! A Mother's affection at this moment ſpeaks within me; ſhall I then leave my Child, my *Harriet?* Ah! no, let me, for her ſake, bear the ills of life. My heart has been ſo long a prey to anguiſh, that, as I have ſaid before, an habitual melancholy has taken poſſeſſion of me; wonder not, then, that I give way to the moſt gloomy preſages: I anticipate time; I ſee my lovely *Harriet* in the ſame forlorn ſituation as her poor mother. The extreme meekneſs of her diſpoſition, the awe ſhe ſeems to ſtand in of her Father, though I have done every thing to make her love him with *perfect love which caſteth off fear*, but ſtill a harſh word makes her tremble. Good God! what will become of me, if I ſhould ſee my Child as wretched as her Parent. Merciful Heaven! avert the cruel decree.

Has not my boſom enough of its own ſorrows, but I muſt ſearch into futurity? How weak I am; but I will ſtrive to conquer this fatal propenſity of borrowing from diſtant times a portion of evil, ſince to me *ſufficient to the day is the evil thereof.*

Am

Am I not indulging an improper curioſity, in wiſhing to know the circumſtances of our unfortunate Friend's life during the laſt three years? Ah! I need not aſk you that queſtion — The bluſh on my cheek, and the diſorder of my whole frame, tell me I am wrong. Am I leſs prudent than I was three years ago? I would not then make the leaſt inquiry. I ſtrove to forget him; I uſed the harſheſt endeavours to drive him from my heart. — What am I now doing? Is it not as criminal as formerly? It is, it is. Oh! *Louiſa!* write not, ſpeak not of him. Dear as he is to me, I muſt, I muſt tear his image from my heart; more than ever muſt I ſtruggle againſt this fatal attachment.—Alas! more difficult than ever is my taſk. Aſſiſt me then, my Friend; ſtrengthen in me every good reſolution, to drive him, if poſſible, from the receſſes of my ſoul. Do not indulge me, if I appear ever ſo importunate, in the leaſt intelligence concerning that unfortunate man. Enough ſhall I have to encounter from my own rebel heart. Ah! I feel the conflict will be great; but I muſt conquer or die. Oppoſe, then, with the utmoſt rigour, all the ſoft emotions of my ſoul, which fate and circumſtances have combined to make criminal in me to foſter. No, dear, long indulged, but fatal and

guilty ideas fly, fly far away. Fly, for ever fly from the unhappy

EMMA CLEVELAND.

LETTER XXII.

To Lady CLEVELAND.

DO not, my ever amiable *Emma*, torture your gentle boſom with vain fears. In a breaſt where Virtue has ſo long reſided, there can be no danger; why then ſhould you deprive yourſelf of the mournful ſatisfaction of partaking of the diſtreſſes of our Friend? Why ſhould you charge me to be for ever ſilent on that head? Is it then poſſible you ſhould charm yourſelf to forgetfulneſs? No; you ſay of all ſciences, *that* is the hardeſt. A free communication of your grief is the moſt likely method of attaining that calm, which a mind, totally devoid of guilt, ought to feel. It will be no impeachment of your Vow to receive from me the ſad recital of our Friend's Story. Do you think a Vow, paid to a human Being, is as ſacred as that paid to God? And did not *Eloiſa* correſpond with *Abelard*, after they had ſeparately devoted themſelves to a religious life? *Theodoſius* and *Conſtantia* too, poured out their ſanctified loves in epiſtles. Theſe

are

are not fictitious characters, but really lived, and were, like my dear Friends, unfortunate.

No, my Love, you muſt not refuſe to hear; not a word will there be in the whole Narrative, which can offend the ear of a Veſtal. His paſſion is not leſs pure, than it is conſtant. He has the ſame delicate ſentiments on your ſituation, that yourſelf entertain. Ah! he is your exact counterpart. Why were ſuch kindred minds ſeparated?

You may blame me for acting contrary to your laſt inſtructions, but I find it wholly impoſſible to comply. *Speak not, write not*, you ſay. My heart is full of the ſubject; I cannot reſtrain my pen; it hurries me away; my hand involuntarily too catches the ſoft contagion; therefore, if I write at all, *he* muſt, now and then, be my ſubject: Either you muſt loſe my correſpondence, or ſubmit ſometimes to hear of the moſt amiable, the moſt unfortunate of men.

But yet I will endeavour to turn to another topic, after I have told you our Friend is better in health. He ſays, "the aſſurance of his being ſtill dear to you; that he was not ſacrificed to Ambition and Grandeur, are balſams to his wounded peace; his eſteem is now juſtified; he ſhall no longer ſtrive to tear your image from his

heart; on the contrary, he ſhall now indulge his ſentiments as the moſt laudable affections of his ſoul; he ſhall cheriſh the fond remembrance of happier times; he ſhall, indeed, look on you as for ever dead to him, but he ſhall not ceaſe to look forward to that time when ye ſhall again be united, in indiſſoluble bonds, in Heaven." Thus, you ſee, your painful recital has afforded him a kind of negative happineſs. Can you then be ſo cruel as to wiſh he had never known your ſufferings? But you could not foreſee the pleaſing conſequences.

Will you forgive me for parting with your picture? It was his right. He told me it was at his requeſt you ſat for it. The tear you ſhed when you gave it me, and the ſighs which agitated your boſom, convince me it is the ſame. Nay, you ſaid, "Take it, my dear *Louiſa*; I cannot bear to look on it; it brings to my recollection a moſt painful circumſtance, which I wiſh to baniſh from my memory." Ah! then, I have reſtored it to the right owner. I could not deny him. If you have learnt that difficult leſſon, I am yet a ſtranger to it. I have not been nurſed in the School of Diſappointment and Self-denial ſo long as you have been; therefore I was ſubdued by his importunities. He ſays it will be the conſtant ſource of conſolation to him, in

"That

" That ſacred hour, when ſtealing from the noiſe
Of Care and Envy, ſweet Remembrance ſooths
With Virtue's kindeſt looks his aching breaſt,
And turns his tears to rapture."

It muſt be an ungentle, an almoſt ſavage virtue, which could refuſe him this. The moſt rigid prudence cannot condemn it.

May not you, my beloved Friend, in time, feel the ſame conſolations from the ſame cauſes? I think you may. Adopt his method; conſider him as one whom death has divided from you. Viſit, in imagination, the cold urn which contains his honoured remains; you will find, in time, a pleaſing employment in paying the mournful tribute of your tears.

I am certain no ill conſequences can ariſe from this innocent indulgence. The greateſt tyrant cannot force the will; nor can he expect to govern that free principle. Your duty, your vows remain immaculate; and your breaſt may experience more contentment than you have felt for theſe three years paſt.

Mr. *Courtenay* (forgive me for writing his name,) and Lord *Stretton* have left me this day; they are gone to meet a Friend, who has arrived, under ſome diſagreeable circumſtances, from *Paris*. They have both promiſed to write to me. In *our* Friend's Letter I expect a little Hiſtory; which, if I am not peremptorily forbid-

den, ſhall accompany my next to *Cleveland-Place.*

You muſt not, my dear Lady *Cleveland*, give way to ſuch gloomy preſages as make a part of your Letter. Indeed you do very wrong. Good God! what uſe is there in tormenting yourſelf with the moſt unlikely things in nature to happen. If you muſt entertain fallacious ideas, let them be ſuch as are pleaſing; indulge them, with all my heart; they may ſerve to amuſe, but can never weaken your virtue. May it, for a glorious incitement to others, be rewarded in this life! Adieu! my beloved Friend!

Yours, for ever and ever,

LOUISA STRETTON.

LETTER XXIII.

To Lady CLEVELAND.

AS I have not yet received a poſitive denial, I have preſumed, my dear Lady *Cleveland*, to encloſe ſome papers in this, which if you do not chuſe to read, may either be conſigned to the flames, or returned to the hapleſs Writer.

Yeſterday I received the packet; the outer ſheet only you will find is addreſſed to me; the reſt — I know not who will claim.

I will

I will make no comment upon them; indeed the text has almoſt overcome me. I have likewiſe received a letter from Lord *Stretton*—I will ſend it to you, together with another I am promiſed from the ſame hand, by the firſt opportunity. But I think I have found you employment enough at preſent, therefore will not keep you longer from beginning your taſk.

Farewell, my deareſt Lady *Cleveland*,

Your faithful,

LOUISA STRETTON.

LETTER XXIV.

To Lady LOUISA STRETTON.

[*Incloſed in the foregoing.*]

Dear MADAM,

TO give expreſſions to feelings which language has not provided, is a difficult taſk; but as you have urged me to the recital of my painful Hiſtory, from the generous motive of procuring eaſe to my long-tortured heart, I will do violence to my griefs, and again open the wounds which diſappointed Love has made. And did not the moſt amiable, the moſt lovely of women, expreſs a wiſh to know how I paſſed theſe three wretched years? Surely ſhe did,

did, or I am greatly deceived. Ah! how wretched has that time been to me! My ſoul never taſted comfort, till you honoured me with the peruſal of her dear, valuable Papers. I had entertained a falſe opinion of her. What balm to my heart, to know ſhe is ſtill more worthy than ever of my love, my adoration! Yet what anguiſh do I feel for her diſtreſſes, penned in her own charming characters!

"Line after line, my guſhing eyes o'erflow,
Led through a ſad variety of woe."

Ah! dear and ever-beloved *Emma!* what have thy ſufferings been for me! Curſt Ambition! thy happineſs and mine have been ſacrificed at its impious ſhrine. Oh! that the breaſt of that angelic woman may at length have comfort reſtored to it!

And can that wretch, her Huſband, be inſenſible of her worth! Oh! 'tis not in Nature that he can do juſtice to it! Urged by the baſeſt motives, he ſtole, like a thief in the night, on my little hoard of treaſure, and tore it from my hopes. He could not love; — his dark ſoul is incapable of the ſoft ſenſations of Love; generous, diſintereſted Love! Mine was founded on the moſt perfect eſteem; every virtue, every grace, was combined in the dear object of it. You, my dear Lady *Louiſa*, have ſeen her; but, ah! you can have no conception of what ſhe was, when the

the lovely portrait, which now lies before me, was only an imperfect reflection of her brighter charms. And have I for ever loſt ſuch tranſporting excellence? Is every proſpect, indeed, cloſed on me for ever? They are, they are; all the powers of Heaven are againſt me.

Yet am I ſtill comparatively happy, to what I was ſome weeks ago. I no longer condemn myſelf for waſting endleſs ſighs on an ingrate. I no longer call my never-failing paſſion a weakneſs; no, it is my glory. She is, ſhe is the miſtreſs of my heart, ſole guider of all its ſoft emotions. I am wedded to her memory; that, and the dear reſemblance of my Beloved, ſhall ever actuate each purpoſe of my ſoul; to her its every faculty is devoted; the wealth and honours of the world ſhall never, for one moment, ſeduce me to forego my ſentiments for her. She is mine; her immortal part is mine; all ſhe can beſtow is mine; the moſt valuable then is my lot.

My tenderneſs for my amiable *Emma* will blunt the edge of my ſword.—But for the exceſs and purity of my paſſion, her brutal Huſband ſhould feel my vengeance in return for his treachery; but that title ſanctifies him. No action of my life ſhall lower me in the eſteem of that beſt of women, nor will I avow a ſentiment which

ſhall

ſhall ever call the bluſh of apprehenſion on her cheek.

Enough, (as ſhe piercingly ſays,) have been her trials. Ah! how much was I beloved, when I thought myſelf contemned and forſaken, without a ſigh!—But I ſhall tire you, my beſt friend, with the ſameneſs of my Letter, for, though all compoſed of Love and Tenderneſs, you ſee I want Gallantry. I am ſo impolitic, when writing to one lovely woman, to fill my paper with the exceſs of my attachment to another. You, my deareſt Lady *Louiſa*, will pardon my error, if ſuch it can be called. But I am convinced, flattery from me would not be pleaſing to you. Accuſe me not of it, when I ſay, you are the ſecond only in my heart. I am very bold; I would aſpire to be ſeated as high in yours. Methinks I I hear you ſay, that is the place of my *Emma*. Ah! Madam, we are one; *Emma* and I, in your gentle heart, muſt be the ſame; let our union there be made perfect, ſince our cruel deſtiny has rendered it impoſſible in another ſituation.

Lord *Stretton* is employing himſelf in the ſame manner as I have the honour of doing; differently, however, I hope, as to mode, and yet virtually the ſame, ſince both are for the accompliſhment of the wiſh next our heart. May we each ſucceed! he, in inſpiring in your valuable boſom a tender

and

and reciprocal paſſion, ſuch as he merits to excite; and I, in filling your gentle breaſt with Pity and Friendſhip; Pity, to induce you to lay before the ever-loved *Emma* the incloſed; and Friendſhip, to ſecure your pardon for the trouble and pain I have given you.

Believe me, dear Madam, to be, with the moſt perfect eſteem,

Your ever-devoted ſervant,

EDWARD COURTENAY.

LETTER XXV.

To Lady CLEVELAND.

AND may I flatter myſelf theſe lines, dictated by the moſt conſtant heart, will meet the eye of the moſt fondly beloved of women? Yet pardon me, dear Excellence, I will not offend thy purity; your own ſoul is not leſs free from impious thoughts, than is the paſſion you have inſpired in my breaſt; which, as it never can decay, ſo can it never harbour a ſentiment derogatory from the object that firſt gave riſe to it. Fear me not then, moſt angelic *Emma*, I only write to implore your forgiveneſs for the harſh thoughts I have entertained of you theſe three years paſt. But I knew not your ſufferings—I knew not the ſtrength of your

your attachment—I knew not that it was in the power of woman to experience ſo ſolid, ſo conſtant a flame. And was *I* the object of it? What a reward for all my ſorrows! Ah! deareſt of women! You ſay I am ſtill dear to you—You pity my misfortunes—Oh! may I never loſe that ſweet remembrance.—Let it ever live in my heart, and may that thought ſmooth the pillow of Death; may it ſoften the gloomy terrors of the Grave, and may it heighten the joys of Heaven; and,

"When my ſoul is plung'd in long oblivion,
Spare this one thought, let me remember *this*,
And ſo deceiv'd, think all my life was bleſt."

Do not imagine I ſhall preſume on the confeſſion you have made in my favour.—No, I would forfeit all my hopes of happineſs hereafter, ere an action, a thought of mine ſhould ſully your bright fame. No, my ever-beloved *Emma*, my paſſion is too pure: Founded on your merit, and increaſed by the further knowledge of your virtues, I would as ſoon cheriſh the impious crime of blaſphemy, as ſeek to injure your purity in the ſmalleſt inſtance. Though unworthy of becoming ſo, Lord *Cleveland* is your Huſband; for your ſake that title ſhall be reſpectable in my eyes.

But what am I doing? I meant only to relate ſome ſimple facts, but my tender feelings have run away with my more prudential

dential intentions. I only meant to tell you, that your exquiſite tenderneſs, which has afforded you ſo many heart-felt diſquiets, was not thrown away on an ingrate; that my ſoul is full of your image; and that even death cannot obliterate your idea from my mind. But I will tear myſelf from the dangerous ſubject. Prudence and virtue ſhall be the principles of all my actions, that I may render myſelf worthy of being eſteemed by you.

I am, with all truth,

Your faithful,

EDWARD COURTENAY.

The paſſages of my unfortunate life are ſo intirely devoid of incident, that I doubt whether the peruſer will receive much entertainment from the employ. But it is written for the inſpection of thoſe who know how to feel, and whom mutual afflictions have rendered partial.

I will date it, like the ever-eſteemed *Emma*, from a ſeparation, which Fate has made eternal. The happy proſpect which at that time opened before me, enabled me to ſupport a ſcene, more affecting than I had ever known, with ſome degree of compoſure. My *Emma*'s gentle boſom heaved with ſighs, and the trickling tears courſed each other down her lovely cheek; a fatal *preſentiment* of what was to follow.

I ſettled

I ſettled my affairs at *Oxford* in two days; on the fourth I arrived at *Courtenay-Lodge*, where I eagerly wiſhed to be, to make preparations for the reception of its deſtined Miſtreſs. I had, in the tender, the happy hours we ſpent together, drawn ſeveral ſketches of the houſe and its environs; I made myſelf maſter of my *Emma*'s taſte; I, without appearing to do ſo, gathered, by the fond arts of Lovers, what would be moſt agreeable to her in the method of laying out my garden. There was a walk at *Woodville-Hall* of which ſhe was particularly fond; I was reſolved to copy that; I thought it would be a grateful compliment to my adored Maid, and would ſerve to convince her of my fondneſs for her, in an attention to theſe trifles. I gathered pleaſure from the idea ſhe was now in her accuſtomed walk, (where we had ſo happily ſtrayed,) with her ſoul filled with the image of her *Edward*. There was an enthuſiaſm in the thoughts that would then engroſs my ſenſes. Her lovely form floated before the viſion of ſight; I ſaw her in every flower, in every tree; inanimate nature preſented her to my view. I talked to her, I gathered thoſe flowers I knew ſhe liked, I preſſed them to my boſom: A thouſand extravagancies of this ſort I was guilty of. Ah! to what exceſs I loved, I doated. I do not enumerate theſe inſtances

ſtances but to prove, if words can prove, what I muſt have felt, when all this fond ſcene, ſo near being realized, was blaſted at once.

After a night which the ſweeteſt dreams of my beloved had rendered delightful, I was buſy in meditating ſchemes of future felicity, and had juſt laid the plan of a beautiful little retreat in my garden, where I fondly pleaſed myſelf with paſſing many bliſsful hours with my *Emma*; in this ſituation, a Letter, which came expreſs from my Mother, found me. The contents, though far from explaining the dreadful cauſe, were ſufficiently alarming. Torn with anxious doubts and fears, impatient to have them confirmed, yet dreading to be told what they were, I threw myſelf into a chaiſe, nor ſtopped or took refreſhment till I reached *Woodville-Hall*. Thither my eagerneſs hurried me. I arrived three days after all my hopes of happineſs had been wreſted from me! Oh! that my *Emma* could but have oppoſed her Father's harſh commands a little longer, or had ſhe but gained a few days before her ſacrifice, with what joy would I have ſet her Father free, and made that ſettlement her avaricious and ambitious Brother wanted. My fortune would have been ſufficient for thoſe purpoſes, and the little we ſhould have had left, with careful induſtry, might have rendered us at

this

this moment rich in each others arms! But our angry Fate prevented all this—It was decreed, and we are the hapleſs victims.

In a ſtate of frenzy almoſt, from want of reſt, food, and fatigue of body and mind, I eagerly demanded what had happened. The family of *Woodville* were all abſent—only a few of the lower Servants left; one of them told me the fatal heart-breaking news, of Miſs *Emma Woodville* being married, three days before, to the Earl of *Cleveland.* I would not give credit to the aſſertion. It was impoſſible! it cannot be! I was breathleſs, and fainting. One of them, at laſt, recollected they had a note for me. It was written by Mrs. *Woodville.* I haſtily tore it open; in it were theſe memorable words:

"I am ſorry to acquaint my dear Mr. *Courtenay*, that, for family reaſons, of the moſt cogent nature, we were obliged to wave our engagement with him, and unite our Daughter *Emma Woodville* to Lord *Cleveland.* I ſincerely hope Mr. *Courtenay* will behave on this diſappointment with his accuſtomed prudence and good ſenſe; and never take any illicit meaſures to ſee Lady *Cleveland*, or reſent the unavoidable conduct of herſelf and family. He muſt conſider ſhe is now the Wife of another man, to whom her vows are ſacred.

It

"It would anſwer no purpoſe in the world for Mr. *Courtenay* to attempt an interruption of the happineſs which is wiſhed her by her Mother, who likewiſe adds a prayer to Heaven, to enable her much eſteemed Mr. *Courtenay* to bear his ill fortune like a Man of Honour and Religion.

I remain, dear Sir,
Your ever obliged Friend,
C. WOODVILLE."

I never can expreſs my feelings on this occaſion. Indeed I was for ſome time wholly inſenſible of my misfortunes. A happy inſenſibility I thought it. When I recovered, they had the goodneſs to aſſiſt me home, whither the chaiſe conveyed me. The ſight of my Mother rouzed me from the intenſe *reverie*, into which I had been plunged; ſhe put me to bed, from whence I never roſe till after ſix weeks; I ſtand indebted to her care for this my ſecond life; but till within theſe few weeks I could not thank her for prolonging an exiſtence doomed to miſery. I could not gain any intelligence from her; as the *Woodville* family had ever been remarkably cloſe in their tranſactions, inſomuch that the Servants knew not of the ſevere ſufferings of their young Lady; though, perhaps, my Mother would not have informed me of all the particulars, leſt I ſhould have been induced

duced to take a fatal revenge of ſome of my *Emma*'s perſecutors. However that may be, I could obtain no light in the affair. I mended very ſlowly in my health; the vicinity to the place where I had been happy, only augmented my miſery. I could not bear to remain at my Father's-in-law. To return to a place that bore the evident marks of preparation for my bliſs, would have been an hell to me.

My ill ſtate of health furniſhed me with a pretext for going abroad, from whence I took the ſecret reſolution never to return. I took leave of my Mother, not without many tears on both ſides; the painful recollection of the fatal cauſe which hurried me from my native land, pierced my heart. The deepeſt melancholy fixed on my mind. And during my voyage and journey I opened not my lips, but to breathe forth ſighs. I arrived at *Montpellier*, determining to make that my reſidence; ſoon, however, I grew tired, and diſſatisfied; I ſhifted the ſcene; ſtill the ſame wearineſs, the ſame dejection followed me. Alas! I could not fly from myſelf! I carried the barbed ſhaft in my boſom; and nothing brought relief. However, ſtill anxious to change, I croſſed the *Alps*, and fixed at *Naples*.

My ſituation there was as retired as poſſible; for although I lived in a place full of company and diverſions, I found it no difficult

difficult matter to ſeclude myſelf from each, as much as ſuited the gloomy temper of my ſoul.

I had continued there more than a year, when one night, as I was returning from a ſolitary walk among ſome venerable ruins, a little diſtance from the city, I ſaw a young Gentleman holding an unequal combat with two others. Juſtice made me eſpouſe the weaker ſide. We had the good fortune to overcome our opponents, who, when they diſcovered which way victory would decide, made a running fight of it. When we were entirely clear of our troubleſome companions, the Gentleman whom I had aſſiſted made me more acknowledgments than the caſe merited; he was profuſe in his gratitude, and inſiſted on carrying his preſerver home to his own houſe, that he might receive the thanks of his family. I made ſome reſiſtance to his intreaties, as I did not wiſh to make acquaintance, neither was I pleaſed at being introduced under ſuch a flattering title, what I had done being no more than bare duty incited me to do; however, I was obliged to ſubmit. After ſuch an introduction, you may believe I was a welcome gueſt. He was the ſon of an illuſtrious houſe; there were two more ſons, and three daughters. I was overpowered with compliments on all ſides. They made the

ſon repeat, over and over again, the whole of the conteſt; they were never tired of reciting my praiſe. The hour grew late, but they could not part with me; the way was dangerous; they ſhould know no reſt, unleſs I would that night take up my lodging in their Palace.

The next day I found it as difficult to get from them, which I could not do till I promiſed to make their houſe my home. Signor *Molini* called on me the morning following; he would take no denial; I muſt attend a Concert to be given at their houſe. Muſic is the ſoul of Love; I wiſhed not to be preſent at an amuſement, once the delight of my heart, but now the ſource of endleſs pain. Harmony awakens all the ſofter ſenſations of the mind, rendering it more ſuſceptible to the calamities of human nature. The Opera of *Ariadne* was performed; the muſic was touching; every nerve vibrated to the notes; the complaint of the forſaken *Ariadne* ſtruck on my heart; I gave myſelf up to the deepeſt affliction. The tears of tender ſympathy rolled down my cheek, I ſat abſorbed in painful cogitation. In my own mind I had retired from all the world; I ſeemed alone in a deſert; I took no notice of the objects around me. Unhappily all objects were not ſo indifferent about me as I was. I had the misfortune to attract the attention

attention of the youngeſt daughter of the *Molini*. I have ſaid, Harmony awakens the ſofteſt ſenſations of the mind; it does more, it alſo creates tender ſentiments. Softened by the ſeducing ſounds, her heart attuned to the tendereſt feelings. *Julia Molini* caſt her moiſtened eye on me; ſhe ſaw the traces of grief in my countenance; a ſimilarity, a ſympathy, which ſhe thought ſhe obſerved between us, gave riſe to a paſſion nearly fatal to us both. Alas! poor *Julia!* It was not the anguiſh of *Ariadne* that called tears from my eyes, and ſighs from my boſom; it was the painful recollection of happier times; it was the ſenſe of my own unparalleled misfortune that cauſed theſe emotions. She ſaw I had a tender heart, and, judging from her own feelings, knew how apt ſuch hearts are to receive an impreſſion from a beautiful object. I have this conſolation, I never flattered her into the belief of my poſſeſſing the leaſt favourable thought of her. I was ſo ignorant of the havock I had made in her gentle boſom, that the idea never would have entered my imagination, much leſs ſhould I have been induced to attempt the conqueſt of her inexperienced heart. When the human heart is wholly ſubdued by Love and Misfortune, it caſts a ſoftneſs over the frame of body. The languor which *Julia* diſcovered in my voice and look, ſhe fatally

miſtook for a partiality for her; ſhe attributed to the ſentiments ſhe believed I poſſeſſed for her, all the air of melancholy which marked my character. With theſe ſelf-deluſions ſhe employed all the hours ſhe paſſed without ſeeing me.

Though totally unconſcious of the feelings I had inſpired, yet I wiſhed to be leſs at the houſe of *Molini*, as the company and ſociety ſuited not my diſpoſition, which rather led me to ſolitude and painful contemplation. By degrees I abſented myſelf; they ſaw the alteration of my conduct, and fancied they had diſcovered the cauſe. One day the young *Molini* called at my lodgings; he expoſtulated with me for ſome time, with great friendlineſs, on the abſence they had taken notice of with concern; and then proceeded to inform me, that my motives were very clear to them; that they honoured me for them; but that nothing was too much to be done for the preſerver of his (*Molini*'s) life. I remained all aſtoniſhed at his preface, and begged he would explain himſelf. He anſwered, his family had, for a long time, taken notice of a particular attachment, againſt which, it was evident, I had made all the reſiſtance in my power; that the exceſſive alteration in his Siſter *Julia*, ſince my abſenting myſelf, had confirmed their ſuſpicions of our affection being mutual. He owned they had

had entertained higher views for *Julia*, but that *her* happineſs, and the obligations their houſe owed *me*, would induce them to wave every other objection.

Judge, Madam, of my ſurprize and grief! I however debated not one moment what ſhould be my anſwer. I aſſured *Molini* of my high ſenſe of the honour his family intended in their ſplendid offer, but that they laboured under an error, in ſuppoſing an habitual melancholy the indication of ſuch a preſumptuous attachment. No one could have a more exalted opinion of Signora *Julia* than I had, but that, unfortunately, my heart was doomed to be the ſlave of an unfaithful Miſtreſs in *England*; that however ill repaid its ſincerity had been, nothing ever could eradicate the firſt impreſſion it had received; that I hoped, from my ſoul, they were equally miſtaken in the conjectures of *la Signora* being attached to me, any more than by the laws of Civility and Friendſhip."

"Do you then refuſe the Daughter of the illuſtrious Houſe of the *Molini?*" I was aſked in a lofty ſtile.

"My heart (I returned) refuſes all other attachments, ſave that it muſt ever feel for an Ingrate. I ſhould be unworthy your favour ſhould I baſely take advantage of the kindneſs of your family, and rob it of one of its brighteſt jewels, bringing only

cold Eſteem, in the place of ardent Love. No, no, my Friend, I could not be ſo baſe."

"Friend!—I diſclaim the title. Though you in all probability ſaved my life, you have more ſorely wounded me in my honour, in refuſing an alliance with our Houſe. I little thought an objection would have laid with you, when *we* too had conquered our prejudices. The Houſe of *Molini* is not to be affronted with impunity." I laboured to convince him, I never intended an affront; my conceſſions made him more haughty and violent; he vowed revenge for the contempt I had ſhewn their offer; he challenged me to meet him in an hour. I told him, I would meet him any where; but that I wiſhed he would take time to reflect on the injury he meditated to bring either on me, or through me, to his Houſe: But I preached to the roaring Ocean. I then ſaid, I would never lift up my hand againſt the life of a man for whom I had freely ventured my own."—"Do you reproach me with your ſervices? I do not thank you for them; you only preſerved my life to make me ſenſible of the ſevereſt diſgrace." However, I at laſt gained ſo much on him, as to prevail on him to put off our rencounter till the morrow evening. In the evening of the ſame day, a *Valet* brought me a note from *Molini*, requeſting me to meet him in another place than where

where he had at firſt appointed, and two hours earlier than the time before mentioned.

I found him diſguiſed and maſked; I aſked him the reaſon? He ſaid, Becauſe, as he was determined one ſhould fall, and that it was as likely to be me as himſelf, he ſhould with more ſecurity make his eſcape. I thought that an illiberal ſentiment, and freely told him ſo. — He anſwered, "Then I might eaſily prevent his taking advantage of it, by killing him." — "That (ſaid I,) I will never do; it never ſhall be ſaid I preſerved your life from aſſaſſinators to become one myſelf."— He anſwered, "You muſt fight." — "I will not; I will not draw my ſword, but to defend my life."—"Thou cowardly, baſe wretch, will no words urge you? Then take this blow as a reward for thy paltry ſervices: Saying which, he ſtruck me with great force on my cheek; and inſtantly drawing his ſword, before I could recover myſelf, made a lunge at me. I thought he uſed his ſword but aukwardly, which I attributed to his indiſcreet paſſion. I immediately had my ſword out, with which I parried his ſecond paſs; the firſt I put by with my hand. From the irregular method of his attack, I judged he knew very little of the Science, or that he meant to make my knowledge of it uſeleſs by his

making falſe parries. I could have diſarmed him twice; but thought it would enrage him to madneſs to be obliged to beg his life. Self-preſervation is a natural principle, and I found it neceſſary to take care of myſelf, as murder ſeemed to be his intention; I, therefore, determined to take the firſt opportunity of wounding him in the ſword-arm, as the only means of ſecuring myſelf; he laid himſelf ſo open, that I could have been through him many times. I had prepared myſelf for this laſt lunge, when, by an unhappy turn of his body, before I could recover my weapon, it glanced by his arm, and ran him through a little below his right breaſt. Inſtantly the unhappy creature fell to the ground, exclaiming, "I die, but I die by your hand; let me have your pity, and I die contented." — Ah! Madam, who can expreſs my agony, when on looſening the maſk I beheld the unfortunate *Julia?* I threw myſelf down by the bleeding body, and claſped it in my arms. I uſed every method to ſtaunch the blood. She feebly uttered, "Convey me home; if you can do ſo with ſafety to yourſelf. I have left an account at home of my intention of ſeeking a releaſe from my ſorrows in death; that will intirely clear you; take care of yourſelf. I doubt I ſhall expoſe you to the rage of my family; yet, if my dying words

words have any influence, they will not offer you any further injury." By this time ſome people, who had, at a diſtance ſeen our engagement, crouded round us. The anguiſh of my mind threw me into a ſtate of inſenſibility; ſome friends, who knew me, took care of me home, while ſome others conveyed the wretched *Julia* to her Father's Palace.

The wound the unhappy girl received moſt fortunately did not prove mortal; ſhe at length recovered, and the firſt time ſhe left her Father's houſe ſhe threw herſelf into a Convent remarkable for its ſeverity. But to return.

The news of this wretched duel was ſoon blazed about. It was talked of every where. The generous *Julia* exculpated me; which, however, had ſhe not lived to do, a paper ſhe had written and ſealed would have anſwered that purpoſe, wherein ſhe ſaid, " on hearing her Brother's report of our converſation, ſhe had taken a reſolution of meeting me inſtead of him. That ſhe could not endure ſo good a Brother ſhould run ſuch a hazard in her cauſe, much leſs that he ſhould lift up his hand againſt a man, who had preſerved his life at the riſk of his own. She was determined not to live, but ſhe dared not employ her own hand in deſtroying her being. She had formed a plan to circumvent her Bro-

ther, in which, ſhould ſhe ſucceed, before this paper would be read, ſhe ſhould receive her death by the hand of a man, who had refuſed to make her life happy. She paid me ſome great compliments on my ſincerity and honour, but that ſhe was fully reſolved not to outlive the diſgrace of being rejected. She then recommended me, in the moſt affecting terms, to her family, intreating them to harbour no ill opinion of me, as I was wholly innocent of ever giving her the leaſt juſt reaſon to believe I entertained a partiality for her; but that ſhe could not avoid her deſtiny, which had decreed her to love and be unfortunate."

As I ſaid, ſhe ſought a repoſe in the boſom of a Convent, where I ſincerely hope ſhe may find it. The pride of the *Molini*, however, had been offended, and that is an injury the *Italians* never forgive. When they are, implacable revenge is the acting principle of their ſoul; and they ſeldom have more than one method of gratifying it—by a ſtilletto and a dark paſſage. I was returning one evening from the houſe of an *Engliſh* Gentleman, when I received a ſtab in the back. I haſtily faced and drew my ſword, when another perſon from behind tripped up my heels, and they both ſtabbed me in ſeveral parts of my body. I have not a doubt, but they would have entirely killed me, had they not been

been interrupted by ſome Gentlemen, who ran up to us. I was taken up for dead, but on proper applications was reſtored to my ſenſes ſufficient to ſpeak the name of the ſtreet where I lodged. The Gentlemen kindly attended me during my confinement. It was to Lord *Stretton* and Sir *Charles Beville* I am indebted for my life: Their kindneſs claimed my gratitude, and the virtues I diſcovered in them inſpired my friendſhip; from that time we never ſeparated. When I was quite recovered, on my account my noble friends left *Naples*. We continued ſome time together at *Rome*, and croſſing the *Alps*, travelled to *Paris*.

My friendſhip for Lord *Stretton* has increaſed in proportion to his excellencies. Lady *Louiſa* poſſeſſes an invaluable jewel in his heart; I hope ſhe will be ſenſible of it. I could relate a thouſand inſtances of the amiable qualities of his mind.

Can my ever amiable *Emma* be offended at my making her a participator of all my troubles and inquietudes? Will ſhe likewiſe pardon my freedom in ſtiling her "my *Emma?*" I cannot bring myſelf to call her Lady *Cleveland*, without the utmoſt force to my feelings. But be not alarmed, I will keep that circumſtance in my mind, though the title appears not by my pen. Alas! how can I forget it! I can never forget I

have been happy; can I then forget I now am wretched?

Adieu,

EDWARD COURTENAY.

LETTER XXVI.

To Lady LOUISA STRETTON.

I Will not ſay I wept over the Letters you ſent me—I ſhed rivers of tears. Oh! *Louiſa!* think what I felt on peruſing thoſe tender lines, where he ſo earneſtly laments my want of reſolution—Fatal precipitancy! I ruſhed into the danger to avoid the reflection of it. Yet, ſhould we have ſucceeded? Alas! I fear not. But let us not dwell on ſuch vain ſurmiſes. As he ſaid, Fate has for ever ſevered us, and we muſt ſubmit. Yes, *Louiſa*, and I will ſubmit; with the ſame uncomplaining patience I have ſtill borne my ill fortune. Our lot, in this life, has not been caſt on a very fair ground; but we are not the former of our own fortunes: Heaven diſpoſes of us as it ſeemeth beſt.

I ought not to regret our Friend's being made acquainted with my ſtory, ſince it has procured him ſome eaſe of mind. Heaven increaſe his comforts on earth! The moſt rigid virtue, I think, cannot condemn me for uttering that prayer.

Make

Make him, however, my deareſt *Louiſa*, no longer the *Confident* of our mutual correſpondence. I believe it is needleſs to give you this caution; I think I may depend on your prudence; but you know it would be highly blameable in us, to run the hazard of encreaſing an unfortunate attachment, which adverſe deſtiny has rendered criminal in me to indulge. No, let him remain ſatisfied with this aſſertion, (which, perhaps, married as I am to another, I ought not even to breath in ſecret,) that had I been free to chuſe, He, of all the world, ſhould have been the maſter of my fate. But, as I am irrevocably bound to another, that other has a right to all I can beſtow. My duty, my religion, and the vows I paid, tho' I own conſtrained ones, ſtill they are his. He has not perhaps ſtrictly obſerved all his duties towards me, yet I can excuſe him; and the little failures on his ſide cannot exculpate me in any error of my ſide. Do not relate any of theſe circumſtances to your friend; it would look as if I made a merit of barely doing my duty. I mean to act right, and I hope my Huſband cannot, even in thought, charge me with breach of duty; yet I cannot help wiſhing that duty and inclination did not pull contrary ways.

A tranſient paſſion, a deſire of revenge, were the firſt motives of Lord *Cleveland*'s addreſſes. But what am I doing? I am his

his Wife. Why then do I ſeek to develope his imperfections? Pardon me, my Dear, he is likewiſe your Couſin. He is more—he is the Father of my little ſmiling *Harriet*. But I am unfit to proceed. Adieu!—love me always, and ſometimes pity your Friend,

EMMA CLEVELAND.

LETTER XXVII.

To Lady CLEVELAND.

SOMETIMES pity you! my deareſt Lady *Cleveland*; yes, I do pity you, indeed; but am not blind to the faults of my Couſin, who is haughty and over-bearing, as if he had done you too much honour in making you wretched. I diſclaim all kin, but claim you as the friend of my ſoul, and the choſen of my heart.

Mrs. *Middleton* is going to leave me for ſome little time, and I ſhall be wholly deſtitute of a companion. My two Beaux are ſtill abſent with their friend *Beville*. I believe I ſhall accompany Mrs. *Middleton* part of her journey. I have a plan in my head to come round by *D*—, and think I ſhall ſtop at Mrs. *Benton*'s. Are you not amazed? Mrs. *Benton*'s is within ten miles of *Cleveland-Place*. True, it is ſo; but that ten miles would carry me farther out of

of my way, whereas it will be but a little airing for you to call there to ſee your Friend. I am rather piqued at the neglect of your Lord; I will not, therefore, come to *Cleveland*, without a formal invitation. I ſhall only ſtop a few hours at *D*—. The day will be next *Tueſday*, and the hour twelve at noon. Do not diſappoint me, I conjure you. Till then believe me your faithful

LOUISA STRETTON.

LETTER XXVIII.

To Lady LOUISA STRETTON.

I Am ſorry you are going to loſe your companion—but really to leave yourſelf wholly deſtitute, is more the effect of choice than neceſſity; ſince, were you leſs proud and ceremonious, you might find an aſylum here. The ſoleciſm in Lord *Cleveland*'s politeneſs I am certain proceeds ſolely from his indolence, and want of thought—tho' I may add ſomething more in excuſe for him, he does not know that you will be intirely left alone at *Stretton-Houſe*. In truth, he knows very little of your tranſactions there. In ſome meaſure that may be owing to his never making enquiry about it. Your Letters have lately been of ſuch a nature as prevented my talking of them; but

but when I have mentioned my receiving news of you, he has heard me with ſo much chilling inattention, that I have had very little encouragement to make him my *Confident* as to the ſubject.

We have got a gueſt, not of my inviting though; ſhe is not ſo formal as you are, to require a certificate, ſigned by each of us, that we ſhould be happy to ſee you at *Cleveland-Place*. It is Mrs. *Hotham* who is our preſent Viſitor. I believe you know ſomething of her; ſhe is not an immenſe favourite of mine; but that is of little conſequence as times go. My Lord is amazingly attached to her; and, would you believe it, ſtaid one day from partridge ſhooting to play with her at Billiards. There is politeneſs for you. I ſhall leave them to follow their own fancies on *Tueſday*, as I do not think her preſence will be neceſſary to render our meeting happy at *D*—. I ſhall hope to prevail on you to return with me. We ſhall ſpend our time very much to our own ſatisfactions, while Mrs. *Hotham* is coquetting with my Huſband. I am not jealous though, *Louiſa*, I promiſe you; but ſhe is to me a ſtrange artful flirting creature.

You promiſed me once a ſight of Lord *Stretton*'s Letter, or Letters I ſuppoſe I may ſay. I want to know what kind of Love-letters my dear friend gives riſe to in the breaſt of a ſenſible man; ſend them to me

on

on the receipt of this; they will ſerve to amuſe me till much-wiſhed-for *Tueſday*.

On looking back, I think you will hardly know your Correſpondent by the ſtile of this, ſo different from ſome Letters which have preceded it. But do you not applaud me? I am ſure you muſt. I ſhall intreat you to do more; that is to imitate me. I have ſeverely condemned myſelf for my falling into expreſſions intirely unbecoming my preſent ſituation; I have impoſed laws on my pen; ſurely if I cannot govern that, I muſt be weak indeed. Follow my example, my dear *Louiſa*, and never for the future write a line which we might not lay before the whole world. I muſt beg you likewiſe not to hold Lord *Cleveland*'s picture up to my eyes, in the moſt unfavourable light. Such as he is I muſt paſs my life with him. Adverting to former ſcenes will only ſerve to render the preſent leſs pleaſing, and more painful to ſupport. It is my duty to wipe all fond remembrances away, which may interfere with the vows I have paid, and ever will fulfil to the utmoſt. Wherein I have failed may heaven forgive!

Adieu! my dear *Louiſa!* join not your force againſt the weakneſs of your friend,

EMMA CLEVELAND.

LETTER XXIX.

To Lady CLEVELAND.

WHATEVER be the motives or cauſe, I congratulate my beloved Friend on the peace which ſeems returning to her amiable and virtuous breaſt. I flatter myſelf that I am one cauſe. The free participation of your ſentiments has effected in ſome meaſure this happy change. Loſe not your confidence, you can never err; an Angel as well might fall, by any temptation I could place in its way, as you.

I do not like your gueſt. I think I do know ſomething of her. Take care of her; ſhe is artful to a degree. If you are not jealous by and bye, I ſhall think your ſecurity lies only in your indifference. I do not depend on the faith of the Lord, or the virtue of the Lady, I give you my word. Pray do the laws of the land admit of a divorce in ſuch a caſe? I doubt not. The men, who are the law-makers, I ſuppoſe have taken more care of themſelves.

Adieu! I am ever yours,

LOUISA STRETTON.

LET-

LETTER XXX.

To Lady LOUISA STRETTON.

[*Incloſed in the foregoing.*]

I Remember a *French* Lover who wiſhed himſelf abſent from his Miſtreſs, that he might have more freedom to pour forth his ſoul before her by letter. I find myſelf as much at a loſs now there are ſo many miles betwixt us as when I was admitted an inmate of your houſe. But I cannot avail myſelf of abſence. In effect you are not ſo. I ſtill have your image before my eyes, and the pleaſing ſound of your voice ſtill vibrates on my ear. May I dare hope I am remembered by you with any degree of tenderneſs? Ah! Lady *Louiſa!* does not my too preſumptuous heart deceive itſelf? Ought I to liſten to its ſoft perſuaſions in my favour? I am infinitely too apprehenſive to love without anxiety. Yet ought I not to be ſatisfied with the permiſſion you have allowed me, to write to you? But then that ſomething, which is ever intruding itſelf to rob me of perfect felicity, tells me your condeſcenſion proceeded leſs from the inclination to hear from me, than from a wiſh to be informed of the fate of my Friend Sir *Charles*. How induſtrious am I in rendering myſelf wretched. Alas! I cannot help it. I deſerve your pity, my

deareſt

dearest *Louisa!* Absurd and inconsistent as I am, I yet deserve your pity. I have the highest, the justest opinion of your rectitude. Perhaps I have too humble an idea of myself. Ah! raise me then in my own estimation, by convincing me, that, such as I am, I have had the power of touching your heart — that I shall owe all my future happiness to you alone.

Few men have appeared under the same disadvantages as I have been constrained to labour through; few men have had the difficulties I have had; but I will give place to no man for truth and love; for the ardency and sincerity of my professions towards you.

But I have not yet obeyed a principal command of your Ladyship's. You bade me be particular respecting *my Friend.*— *Beville* has drawn himself into a very awkward situation, from whence I know not how he is to be extricated: He has been extremely imprudent, and the consequences are likely to be of a serious nature. I doubt I can be of very little assistance to him in this perplexing affair; notwithstanding, I shall chearfully undertake his cause.—He informed me, on my arrival, that he had stole a treasure from *France.* I desired him to explain his meaning. He then proceeded to tell me, he had been fortunate enough to obtain the enlargement of a Nun

of

of Quality, from one of the Convents, remarkable for its rigour. That he had encountered many difficulties in the enterprize; but that his reward had been glorious. In ſhort, Madam, I find he has atchieved an illegal advantage, by means that love itſelf cannot (or at leaſt ought not to) juſtify. *Courtenay* and myſelf were admitted to the preſence of the Lady. She is exquiſitely beautiful. Her charms might indeed tempt the moſt cowardly to hazard all dangers, and defy all the world: But yet, cool reaſon muſt condemn my Friend. The manner of her eſcape is ſo romantic in the relation, that one can hardly believe it could be effected. The dangers to which ſhe expoſed herſelf, for his ſake, prove how very ſtrong her love of him and liberty has been. I am, however, very ſorry to find they have not yet taken the only advantage they had left of rendering their ſituation ſecure—I mean by marriage. I founded my Friend on that head. He rather evaded my queſtion; but, at laſt, ſaid, there were ſome things which neceſſarily muſt be ſettled firſt. I told him, for his and the Lady's honour, I thought that ought to have been the firſt buſineſs ſettled. He anſwered, it was her deſire to remain unengaged till ſhe knew how her flight was received at *Paris*. I took the liberty of blaming them both, particularly *Beville*. There ſeemed a want

of

of delicacy in his proceeding. I preſſed them to inform me in what I could be ſerviceable to them. Sir *Charles* ſaid, he wiſhed I would go to *Paris*, and try to accommodate matters with the Relations of the Lady. I freely promiſed I would make the voyage, provided they would allow me to do them the moſt eſſential piece of ſervice firſt, namely, to beſtow her hand on him before I ſet out. Both *Courtenay* and I were obliged to uſe many arguments to prevail, which at laſt we accompliſhed: And I had the honour of being Father to the fair Adventurer. God knows whether the buſineſs of the day will be productive of happineſs to my Friend, but I am ſure it is a ſtep which he ought to have taken immediately on his arrival in a ſafe place.

Thus, Madam, ſhall I be torn from you by an act of Friendſhip; but I am certain you would blame me if I neglected my Friend in this exigency. I hope the buſineſs will be compromiſed happily for all the parties. However, I own my heart miſgives me on the occaſion. My *Courtenay* accompanies me to *Paris*. I ſhall have the honour of kiſſing your hand before I go. Sir *Charles* will allow me to ſpend two or three days with her, who has the free power over all my days, and the circumſtances of them.—I find Mr. *Courtenay* has written to your Ladyſhip.—May I hope

hope to be favoured with a line by the return of the Meſſenger? I ſhall draw the moſt flattering concluſions from your goodneſs. Adieu! my ever adored *Louiſa!*

Your faithful

STRETTON.

LETTER XXXI.

To Lord STRETTON.

DO you know, my Lord, I thought your Letter rather in the hum-drum ſtile. Is the man mad? What, in the name of Common Senſe, would you have me do, which I have not done? What ſhall I ſay, to drive out from your imagination that troubleſome *ſomething*, to which as you can give no name, neither ſhould you give encouragement. I vow I ſhall be afraid to venture through life with you, if you are ſubject to theſe megrims. I know not whether I ſhould have written, if you had not promiſed to draw flattering concluſions from my writing at all. Now, if you do not, I have done with you. Seriouſly, my dear Lord, I have, with the utmoſt ſincerity and candour, laid before you my whole heart, with all its ſecrets, and purpoſes; I have freely owned, that, had I given it encouragement, I might, in time,

time, have entangled myſelf in a partiality for your Friend. But, on the inſtant I perceived my thoughts turned that way, I took myſelf to taſk; I was ever fully determined my heart ſhould accompany my hand. If I had any concealments to make, ſhould I be thus ingenuous? Do not then harbour ſuſpicions ſo injurious both to yourſelf and me. Believe me, there is no one on earth for whom I have a ſincerer regard than your Lordſhip; think not of *Courtenay*. I ſhall never feel more for him than your Friendſhip for him will authorize your Wife to feel. I look on him as wedded in mind to my beloved *Emma*.—Their union is ſanctified in Heaven, though they are for ever ſeparated on earth.

Certainly nothing in the world but my eſteem for you, and a perſeverance natural to women, can induce me thus to lay aſide my ſex's charter of being ſolicited, and turn ſolicitor. Do you not think my pride receives a mortification in being thus humbled? You ought to ſpare me a taſk to which I am wholly unequal. Twice have I held out my hand towards you; and I doubt this looks very like a third tender of myſelf. Am I to be ſtill rejected, or will you at laſt take compaſſion on the poor Damſel, who is ſo wofully apprehenſive of dying a Maid?—"Ah! don't let me die a Maid; take me for pity."

I know

I know not what to make of your Friend *Beville*'s affair; it ſeems a very intricate buſineſs. I am a little vexed that you ſhould be conſtrained to quit *England* for ſome time upon the occaſion, as I cannot perceive what end it is to anſwer. I am not wonderfully taken with your account of the Lady, notwithſtanding the warmth of your deſcription. I think Sir *Charles* ſhould not have truſted her to the view of two men poſſeſſed of the fineſt ſenſibility. However, I will not follow your Lordſhip's example, and ſuppoſe, that the heart muſt be captivated with every beautiful face it ſees. I have more confidence in you than you place in me; but when you know my heart better, you will find its chief excellence to be Sincerity. Think more favourably of your own merit, and that will teach you a better opinion of your

LOUISA STRETTON.

LETTER XXXII.

To Miſs WOODVILLE.

OH! my deareſt *Fanny!* I write to you now as the only remaining Friend I have in the world. Yes, thoſe whom I fondly held too near my heart have proved

my greateſt enemies. Ah! could they meditate the deſtruction of her, whoſe ſoul reſted on their friendſhip! Yet this, my beloved Siſter, is a riddle to you. You are aſtoniſhed; you are a ſtranger to my meaning; let me then explain myſelf.

I acquainted you with the particulars of my hearing of the welfare of an unfortunate man, to whom I have ever been too partial. I likewiſe informed you of my making a relation of ſome of the paſt events of my life, to juſtify myſelf in his opinion, and how ſeverely I condemned myſelf for being prevailed on to go ſo far, ſince I found, too fatally found, ſo far from giving eaſe, either to his boſom, or my own, I had but increaſed a partiality, whoſe indulgence Fate forbids. But ſtill I ſought to ſmother my unhappy paſſion, nor ſuffer it to gain a greater force. I gave laws to my lips; I never ſuffered my pen to trace his name in my letters to Lady *Louiſa*; I glanced not on the ſubject; I forbad her mentioning him to me. She obeyed, and claimed a merit from her obſervance. But how ſhall I tell my *Fanny* ſhe has, by liſtening to his ſophiſtry, been ſeduced to fall into a plan, which has involved me in the greateſt diſtreſs. My friendſhip for her has drawn me into the moſt perplexing difficulties. Ill-adviſed *Louiſa!* what have I

not

not to fear from a friend ſo weak, againſt the perſuaſions of a man ſo improperly attached!

I received a letter from her the other day, wherein ſhe engaged me to meet her at Mrs. *Benton*'s. Her reaſon for not coming on to *Cleveland-Place*, was on account of the neglect my Lord had ſhewn towards her on the affair of her engagements with Lord *Stretton*. Charmed with any opportunity of meeting my friend, I ſat off yeſterday morning for *D*—, which, you know, is no more than ten miles from us. I excuſed myſelf from taking Mrs. *Hotham* with me, as I choſe to be alone. I wondered ſhe ſhould propoſe going, as it was the firſt time ſhe had made ſuch an offer.—I impute this to my Lord being abſent at the time.

With what eagerneſs I proſecuted my little journey! How long, how tedious ſeemed the way, ſo earneſt was I to embrace my friend! As the chaiſe drove up to the door, I perceived *Louiſa* at the window. My heart bounded to meet her! A ſervant, as I thought, flew out of the houſe, to aſſiſt me in getting out of the chaiſe. My haſte hardly permitted me to touch the ſtep; my foot miſſed it, and I was in danger of falling to the ground, had not the ſervant, with more zeal than prudence, or

reſpect, as I then thought, caught me in his arms. I might have overlooked that circumſtance, had I not felt myſelf cloſely preſſed to his boſom, which beat with the utmoſt violence. Surprize and indignation made me inſtantly turn my head, when, in ſpite of ſome artificial diſguiſes, I diſcovered — Oh! *Fanny*, how ſhall I deſcribe what I ſuffered, when I diſcovered this pretended ſervant to be no other than the man in the world whom I wiſhed never more to behold! Yes, *Fanny*, dear as I fear I ſtill muſt own he has ever been to me, yet ſtill I ardently wiſhed never to behold him more. Oh! why then did my friend, my *Louiſa*, who ſo well knew my ſentiments, why did ſhe expoſe me to ſo ſevere a trial?

I made ſome exclamation at the firſt knowledge of this unfortunate man. I was too confuſed to remember what I ſaid. I heard his voice, but the agitation he was in prevented him from diſtinctly articulating any connected ſentence. I know not how I got into the houſe; my extreme deſire to conceal the cauſe of my perturbation from my ſervants, I believe was the ſole ſupport of my ſpirits. *Louiſa* met me at the door; I flew into her arms, as if for protection; there all my fortitude forſook me. A thouſand conflicting paſſions ruſhed at once on my imagination; the attack was too powerful,

powerful, and I ſunk under it. Ah! good God! why could I not meet him with ſome degree of calmneſs? Why ſhould my unhappy partiality thus expoſe itſelf? Why could I not behold him with a proper ſerenity of mind? Ah! unhappy *Emma!* how haſt thou betrayed the inward feelings of thy mind! I was not ſo totally inſenſible as not to diſcern the affliction of thoſe about me. Poor *Courtenay* had the prudent precaution to keep out of the room. When I had a little recovered myſelf, I thought it the moſt diſcreet method to attribute my fainting to the pain I found in my ancle, and likewiſe my joy on meeting Lady *Louiſa.* I affected to laugh at my extreme weakneſs, both of body and mind. This grimace, however, laſted no longer than while Mrs. *Benton* remained preſent; as ſoon as ſhe quitted the room, I could no longer reſtrain my emotions.

My tears, for ſome time, obſtructed the paſſage of my voice; I could not form a ſentence even to chide Lady *Louiſa* for her imprudence; ſhe, however, read her indiſcretion in the diſtreſs ſhe ſaw me labour under, and, throwing her arms round my neck, "You muſt, you muſt forgive me," (ſhe cried;) I could not reſiſt this opportunity; you muſt likewiſe forgive my friend. Ah! has he not ſuffered enough

already! Compoſe yourſelf, then, my beloved *Emma*, and allow me to call the moſt amiable of men"—

"What are you about to do? (cried I, catching her hand.) Why do you ſeek to drive me to diſtraction? No, rather let me, this moment, quit this fatal place. Expoſe me not again to the ſight of one, who has once already deprived me of my ſenſes. Cruel and injurious *Louiſa!* (I continued, redoubling my tears,) why have you conſpired to make me wretched?"

"Hear me, my deareſt *Emma*, only hear me."—"Alas! why ſhould I liſten to your ſophiſtry? You cannot extenuate the fault of being acceſſary to my meeting with the man, of all others, I ought to ſhun for ever. Fatal friendſhip! Oh! *Louiſa*, your attachment to me has undone me."

"Talk not ſo, my dear Lady *Cleveland*; wound not my ſoul with ſuch cruel reflections. I would die to render you happy, I would indeed. What injury do you ſuſtain in having, by accident, ſeen a man who is deſervedly dear to you? He will never ſeek an improper advantage from this *rencontre*; he knows you were entirely ignorant of my intention; he ſaw the letter I wrote to you to engage you hither; he is going to leave *England*, he ſays, perhaps never to return; could I then deny him this one requeſt,

urged

urged too on his knees? Ah! Lady *Cleveland*, you know not the ſtrength of my friendſhip, if you think I could refuſe ſuch a man only the bare ſight of you!"

"Should you then, my dear *Louiſa*, expoſe your friend, who owns ſhe has more ſtruggles in her wretched boſom than Friendſhip can give? Should you then expoſe her to a trial ſo ſevere that Friendſhip could not reſiſt? Ah! then, let me fly far from ſuch a man, who could ſubdue you to undertake ſo wild, ſo improper a ſcheme. If the cool boſom of Friendſhip melts, oh! what has not the heart, aching with Affection, to dread! Let me then fly from the danger, while yet this conſolatory thought is left me, that I have not wittingly fallen into the ſnare laid for me, by one on whom my ſoul repoſed its moſt unlimited confidence."

"Go, then, cruel and inhuman Lady *Cleveland*, (ſaid *Louiſa*, while tears plentifully bedewed her face;) go, then, and leave an unhappy man to his fate. Your once-loved *Louiſa* too, ſuffer not the voice of Friendſhip to plead in her favour. Your ſtoical ſoul ſcorns the tender feelings, rejects all thoſe amiable ſoftneſſes which humanize the mind; but talk no more of the danger of beholding the man whom you

ſcorn. Alas! your heart knows nor Love nor Pity!"

"Ah! *Louiſa!* (cried I, throwing my arms round her neck,) is it thus you comfort and ſuſtain me? Ah! what will become of me, if ſhe who governs the principles of my ſoul thus gives it up to the guidance of its paſſions? You ought to be the guardian of my honour, and the honour of my Lord. Should *you* then be the contriver of a plot to overturn my rigid ſcruples? When the danger is great ought I not to be cautious? But with the deſpotiſm of fate you impel me to act contrary to the dictates of my own ſoul, which, however it has been torne by conflicting paſſions, never till it liſtened to thy Syren voice has it turned a deaf ear to the mandates of reaſon. Every way you ſeek to overpower the little fortitude I have remaining; if I have ſtrength to reſiſt your ſoothing flattery, you then terrify me with menaces. Ah! *Louiſa!* what is there I can refuſe you? No, though my judgment tells me I am wrong, I reſign myſelf to you. Beware, leſt you one day repent the ſtep you have now taken. I depend now ſolely on you."

"May Heaven forſake me! (exclaimed Lady *Louiſa*, dropping on her knees, and lifting up her hands to the Heaven ſhe atteſted;)

teſted;) may I be the moſt wretched of all beings here, and never know reſt or happineſs hereafter, if from this moment I become not the Guardian of your honour: Though I urged you (continued ſhe, riſing,) to admit *Courtenay* to your preſence, I meant to be the eye and ear witneſs of all your converſation, not from the moſt latent thought of ill in the intention of either, but to juſtify you to yourſelves. Though I do not, or ever can reſpect Lord *Cleveland*, yet I reſpect your ſituation as being his Wife. Nor ſhould the wealth and honours of the univerſe bribe me to urge you to the commiſſion of an act which ſhould cauſe the ſlighteſt feeling of remorſe, or even call up the fainteſt bluſh on your cheek. On the contrary, did I perceive the leaſt inclination in either of you to take an improper advantage of your meeting now, and plan others hereafter, I would, with all my power, ſeek to prevent it. Judge then, my beloved *Emma*, what you have to apprehend from me. Where is the danger? Do I not place the higheſt degree of confidence in you both? — Ah! my dear *Fanny*, do you not condemn me! Oh! do I not ſeverely reprehend myſelf! I ought not to have allowed *Louiſa* to introduce *Edward* to me — I ought to have oppoſed her — Did I then give her permiſſion? Alas, if I

did not, my refuſals grew ſo faint, ſhe heard them not, or fancied ſhe ſhould not offend me by a non-compliance with my requeſt. In an inſtant he was at my feet — The Man! — Oh! *Fanny!* All that had ever paſſed ſince our long, long ſeparation — the pains, the agonies I had endured, all, all crouded in one ſad moment over my ſoul; I wept, I wrung my hands; I would have implored his pardon; I knew not what I would have done. His diſtreſs was not inferior to mine — He begged me to be compoſed, to endeavour to be happy, to forget him for ever, if that circumſtance could reſtore peace to my boſom. — Alas! how can I ever forget him? How can I form the wiſh to remember his love and truth no longer? We ſpent about half an hour together, making fruitleſs lamentations on our hard deſtiny. Lady *Louiſa* wept as much as ourſelves. I really believe ſhe would think no ſacrifice too great to reſtore us to happineſs — But ah! who can *overtake occaſion paſt, and bring about again the days, the months, the years that ſaw us happy!*

Let me do juſtice to the purity of this unfortunate Man's paſſion — Not a word or action eſcaped him, which could call for a rebuke from the moſt rigid Prude. The moſt reſpectful awe ſeemed to govern both.

He

He told me, "He had long been dead to the world in his own idea, and that I muſt allow him the fond indulgence of thinking me ſo likewiſe; that my marriage was the grave which contained my perſon, but that my ſoul, enlarged from its earthly fetters, was permitted this friendly viſit to his — "And believe me, (he added,) when we are united above in the heavenly regions, a paſſion more pure, more unmixed, cannot engroſs my ſoul, than it feels this moment." The propriety of his conduct gave a calm to my mind while I ſaw him; I thought I never had felt ſo great a remove from inquietude ſince my misfortunes, but this elyſium laſted only while I ſaw him; for when I took leave of my Friends, which I ſoon did, not permitting either of them to attend me to my chaiſe, leſt by ſome involuntary emotion I might betray myſelf to my Servants; I ſay, as ſoon as I was by myſelf, I found the tide of affliction pour into my ſoul with ten-fold impetuoſity. Ah! how different was my journey home from that to *D*—. Then my ſelf-condemnation began; oh! *Fanny*, when will it end? I was, indeed, betrayed at firſt, but ſhould I have liſtened to the Betrayer, and permitted her ſtill to add to the deceit — Nay, have I not joined in it?—Ah! her friendſhip is dangerous — I dare not again truſt

her—She meant my happineſs, but ſhe has deprived me of that ſhe can never reſtore, the conſcious rectitude of my own mind. My heart will never ceaſe to condemn itſelf. I think I am more wretched than ever—Alas, was that neceſſary? Adieu, my beloved *Fanny*; may you ever be a ſtranger to the pangs which thy unhappy Siſter ever feels.

EMMA CLEVELAND.

LETTER XXXIII.

To Lady CLEVELAND.

AH! my deareſt Siſter, is it from me you ſeek conſolation? Is it to me you apply as *the only remaining friend you have in the world?* Alas! your diſtreſs wounds me ſo deeply, as to leave me incapable of affording you any comfort, ſave that alone of weeping with you; of that I can allow you a copious ſhare. But you ought to forgive Lady *Louiſa*—She meant well. I love her tenderly for her exceſſive affection for the Siſter of my heart. Ah! my beloved *Emma!* why do I ſee you and my amiable Play-fellow unhappy! How does your former ſufferings return to my memory! Never, never ſhall I forget the anguiſh you expreſſed, when you gave free

vent

vent to the affliction which overwhelmed you, and poured forth your griefs into the faithful boſom of your *Fanny*. How could my Papa be ſo cruel as to force you into ſo hateful a marriage? Young as I then was, I could plainly ſee Lord *Cleveland* did not love you with poor *Edward*'s love.—How different were their behaviour—Lord *Cleveland* ſeemed as if he was doing you an honour, in condeſcending to rob you of all your happineſs, while the ſole joy and intention of *my favourite* was to form your felicity and ſhare it with you.

Being called away by ſome company coming, I was obliged to break off. On my return, I caſt my eye over what I had written: I am totally diſſatisfied with the whole of it. I ſhall only add to your diſtreſs of mind inſtead of alleviating it. But my fancy ran away with my judgment; a thing eaſy enough, ſeeing how ſmall a ſhare I poſſeſs of the latter. But you, my dear Siſter, will readily excuſe all the little irregularity of the head, when you know how truly the heart is devoted to you; and that, believe me, it is, and ever ſhall be. Would to Heaven you had poſſeſſed as large a proportion in the hearts of my Brother and Siſter; you might then have been as happy as I have ever wiſhed you.

The

"The evil mind can never know peace." This Adage is fully verified in the caſe of my Brother and Siſter. They are neither of them happy. Lady *Bell* has brought *conſequence* to her Huſband, but not felicity. She is one of the worſt tempers in the world. I ſpent a few weeks with them lately; you can never imagine how diſagreeable the whole time was to me; their continual diſputes made me think every day too long; glad was I when my Papa came to fetch me home. Lady *Bell* ſeems wholly to forget, that the part of the woman is obedience. I think ſhe ſhould come and take a leſſon from my Mama, who is Patience and Forbearance itſelf. *Clara* is not in the leaſt happier than *James*. Captain *Brereton* is quite the modern Huſband, and I much fear ſhe will prove as much the modern Wife. He is a ſtrange inconſiſtent man; for though his neglect of her, and attachment to other women, are equally notorious, he is jealous of her to a degree. *Clara* begged my Mama to let me paſs a winter with her in town; but, thank Heaven, ſhe did not gain permiſſion: Nay, Captain *Brereton* told me, he ſhould not aſk me, as he thought the company of his Wife was ſufficient to ſpoil me, and would effectually prevent any man in his ſenſes from making me an offer. Judge

how

how happy he muſt be with a woman of whom he has ſo unfavourable an opinion.

I am certain, was an impartial and unprejudiced perſon to become, at ſeparate times, inmates at the houſes of *James*, *Clara*, and yours, not knowing any thing of the private hiſtory of either, they would never judge, from the appearance of things, that the two firſt marriages were the reſult of choice, and the laſt of compulſive force.

I have not communicated any part of your Letter to my Mama. I fancy you do not wiſh I ſhould, as you have not ſignified ſuch a deſire throughout the whole. I cannot think that circumſtance an omiſſion from over-ſight, but rather that you intended to ſave her venerable boſom from the anguiſh of knowing your unhappy ſituation, without the capacity of affording relief to the Child of her Love. If I have erred, my deareſt Siſter will inform me in her next. Adieu! may Heaven ſupport you!

I am, moſt affectionately,

Yours for ever,

F. WOODVILLE.

LET-

LETTER XXXIV.

To Lady LOUISA STRETTON.

THE more I reflect on my conduct, under the ſevere trial to which you expoſed me, the more am I diſſatisfied with myſelf; every day encreaſes my anguiſh. Good God! how weak, how almoſt deſpicable am I in my own eyes! Oh! *Louiſa!* how could you thus leſſen your Friend in her own opinion?

Yes, my Dear, I do forgive you; your tender pleadings have ſucceeded *. Alas! how powerleſs am I to oppoſe you! The weakeſt of all human beings is potent to me. Yet let me expoſtulate; Was it, my dear *Louiſa*, prudent to expoſe me to the view and converſation of a man, whom it is my duty to avoid? If I had been fooliſh enough to wiſh ſuch a *renconter*, ought you not to have uſed every argument to diſſuade me from ſuch a hazardous enterprize? But you could not foreſee I ſhould act with ſuch glaring impropriety. What will he think of me? To weep, to wring my hands, like one diſtracted. Oh! *Louiſa! Louiſa!* he muſt deſpiſe me; I cannot ſupport the idea of being deſpiſed by him. I might have teſtified my regard for him;

* Lady *Louiſa*'s Letter is omitted.

I might

I might have lamented our evil deſtiny; and there might have been ſome degree of dignity and ſenſe in my procedure. But, good God! what childiſhneſs, what folly, ſhewed itſelf in my behaviour! Will he not thank Heaven, that has prevented his union with a woman ſcarce removed from Idiotiſm? My only prayer is now, never to ſee or hear his name; I could not ſupport the ſight of him; the conſciouſneſs of my extreme folly would ſink me to the earth. Ah! Heaven! what has been the ſtate of my mind ſince that fatal day! I feel every moment as if I had acted wrong. I can no longer ſay to myſelf, on any little inquietude, that the behaviour of Lord *Cleveland* excites—Well, if I am unhappy, ſtill I have this conſolation, I have neither brought it on myſelf, or by my conduct merited it; but that time is now over. I vowed to myſelf never to ſee the man whoſe image my ſtrongeſt efforts could not wreſt from my ſoul; I have ſuffered myſelf to be prevailed on to break that reſolution, and for the vow-breakers, what peace remains on earth?

Let Lord *Cleveland* now uſe me ever ſo ill, I cannot complain; I dare not; I am myſelf too culpable to dare to arraign his conduct. Small as my proportion of eaſe has for a long time been, ſurely it was cruel

in

in my Friend to rob me of any part; indeed, I think I have loſt the whole. I find no relief now but in my tears, and when they flow from remorſe and contrition, they wear deeper furrows in a heart already overcharged with woe. They loſe their healing quality, and turn all corroſive; may they have power to waſh away all memory of former pain! Adieu!

EMMA CLEVELAND.

LETTER XXXV.

To Lady CLEVELAND.

STILL muſt my deareſt *Emma* devote herſelf to remorſe and anguiſh. I was in hopes my laſt Letter had reſtored you to a proper opinion of yourſelf. I muſt blame you exceedingly; one would think, by your ſelf-condemnation, that you had been guilty of the moſt atrocious crimes; ſurely you ſhould ſuffer your own reaſon to act, and that would inform you, you have no real cauſe for ſuch ſevere reprehenſion. Beſides, I think, there is a ſpecies of cruelty in your upbraidings: Why ſhould you wiſh to deprive an unfortunate man of the ſmall conſolation of knowing himſelf beloved, by one who ſtrives to tear his image from

from her breaſt? You ought to be ſatisfied, ſince the moſt rigid virtue cannot accuſe you; you ought to be ſatisfied, that it has been in your power, conſiſtent with your marriage vow, to give a ſmall portion of eaſe to his mind. You likewiſe torment yourſelf with fancying he deſpiſes you; he has reaſon to complain of your harſhneſs, but that will never raiſe contempt in his boſom.

But I will ſay no more on this head; I will leave it to abler perſons.

Yeſterday my Friends left *Stretton-houſe*. I own their departure has made me melancholy. I find Lord *Stretton* has his ſhare in the ſighs which eſcape me; this is, in a great meaſure, owing to the friendly participation he has had in the ſufferings of my deareſt Friends. He does not ſee my late behaviour in the blameable light you do; and yet his notions are extremely delicate. Indeed, I am not altogether pleaſed with you; I do not think you have thoroughly forgiven me; but I ſaid I would not dwell longer on this ſubject, I will have done with it.

This journey which my Lord undertakes, ſeems a very wild-gooſe ſort of a chaſe; he is to endeavour to reconcile the Relations of Lady *Beville* to the ſtep ſhe has taken in marrying without their conſent. Can any

one

one in their ſenſes ſuppoſe her Father and Mother will be violently enraged at the promotion of a Daughter they meant to ſacrifice to a monaſtic life? All their intention ſeems to be, to diſpoſe of her without money; ſhe has aſſiſted their meaſures, ſince ſhe has united herſelf to a man of good fortune, without robbing her family of any part of theirs. Thus far the taſk of Lord *Stretton* appears a very eaſy one; and yet Sir *Charles* paints it as an *Herculean* labour. It appears to me as an intricate buſineſs; I do not pretend to the gift of divination, or I ſhould be very apt to imagine there is ſome ſecret cauſe for their apprehenſion. Then her objection to having the ceremony performed till my Lord had been in *France*. He was rather backward too; certainly neither had any regard to appearances at leaſt; but the *French*, you know, are not quite ſo ſcrupulous as the *Engliſh* in general are.

Lord *Stretton* told me, as Sir *Charles Beville*'s houſe was not quite ready to receive them, he ſhould take it as a favour, if I would offer them mine. I readily aſſured him, that, without a compliment, I looked on him as Maſter of it, therefore begged him to invite them to ſtay as long as it might be agreeable to them. Accordingly a Meſſenger is diſpatched to the new

new married Pair, for whoſe arrival I ſhall wait very patiently, as I have no violent *preſentiment* that I ſhall be exceedingly attached to *La Belle François.*

She is amazingly handſome, I am informed by both the Gentlemen, though I do not find ſhe is much to the taſte of either. Mr. *Courtenay* ſays, ſhe wants that melting ſoftneſs which can alone touch the heart; and Lord *Stretton* thinks her void of ſenſibility. With theſe deficiencies, one ſhould be apt to wonder by what charm Sir *Charles* was ſubdued. My Lord ſays, his Friend has a romantic caſt, and that perhaps the difficulties he found in gaining her had a greater ſhare in the conqueſt than even her beauty. However it may be, I have no great idea of their being very happy in the married ſtate.

I doubt I ſhall feel a little embarraſſed on the reception I am to give theſe folks, as you know I am rather at a loſs on theſe occaſions. The recluſe life my Father made me lead, left me unacquainted with the forms of ceremony. I muſt manage in the beſt manner I can. If I find her agreeable to me, I ſhall ſoon recover my eaſe; on the contrary, (which I moſt think will be the caſe,) if I do not like her, I ſhall be ſo formal, and ſo aukward, as will make me abſurd. My greateſt conſolation

is,

is, that Mrs. *Middleton* has promiſed to come to me next week; her company will be a great comfort: We ſhall be juſt able to make a party at quadrille or whiſt, and then we ſhall all be on an equality.

Adieu! Yours moſt affectionately,

LOUISA STRETTON.

LETTER XXXVI.

To Lady CLEVELAND.

DEAR and precious as thoſe bleſt moments were which I ſpent with the beſt of women, yet I almoſt regret them, ſince I find, by our Friend Lady *Louiſa*, they have added more anguiſh to your gentle boſom. Ah! Madam, can you ſtill remember me with the leaſt affection, or even pity, and yet have the cruelty to grudge me the ſatisfaction of ſeeing you for a few tranſitory minutes? Had I urged you to any meaſures which could have raiſed the ſlighteſt apprehenſion of my want of delicacy, and purity in my ſentiments for you, I will then allow you might have wiſhed we had never met; but in this caſe, ſurely you are too ſevere both to yourſelf and me.

I would

I would not have preſumed to write to you, but that my ſoul longed to aſk you a few ſhort queſtions, which our mutual diſtreſs prevented. Good God! what emotions filled my breaſt when I firſt beheld you from your chaiſe! What agitation ſeized my whole frame when I touched your hand! When the accident of your ſlipping your foot from the ſtep gave me the opportunity of catching you in my arms, to prevent your falling, what words can expreſs my ſenſations! Oh! *Emma!* deareſt and moſt amiable of women! have I loſt all proſpect of happineſs with her who can give ſuch tranſports to my ſoul? Pardon me, dear Excellence! I meant not to ſay what I have here written.—I check my pen.—Indeed, I am not at preſent ſufficient maſter of myſelf to proceed.

I ſaid, my intent was to have aſked you a few ſhort queſtions. You have ſometimes hinted to Lady *Louiſa*, that Lord *Cleveland*'s behaviour to you has not been of that kind, to conciliate the affection or eſteem of a woman unhappily prepoſſeſſed. Good God! can he be ſuch a monſter as to uſe you ill? Yet, I know he muſt.—Such unexampled meekneſs and patience as mark your character would not, unleſs cauſe had been given, have vented itſelf, even

even to the boſom of friendſhip: Too ſurely, then, Love had the leaſt ſhare in his marriage with you. His temper, I have had many proofs, is bad, but you could never have given him cauſe to wreak his ill-nature on you. Merciful Heaven! what an aggravation it muſt be to your diſtreſs, in being for ever torn from the Man who adores you; to be united to one whoſe ill qualities muſt for ever prevent your taſting the leaſt degree of peace with. What have not your Father and Brother to anſwer for?

I hope you will not think I have preſumed too much in writing on this ſubject, or, indeed, in writing at all; but reflect, this melancholy privilege is all I can boaſt. Believe me while I ſwear, never to abuſe your goodneſs, if you will now and then indulge me, by letting me hear, by your own hand, of your welfare, and likewiſe permitting me ſometimes the happineſs I now enjoy. Were you to deny me this favour, I ſhall think you have united with Fate to make me ſtill more wretched than I have already been. I am aſſured our dear *Louiſa* will be ſo kind and generous as to take charge of any Epiſtle you may have the goodneſs to pen for me.

For Heaven's ſake let me know how you are in health; I am but too certain the ſhock

ſhock you received muſt have cauſed the indiſpoſition Lady *Louiſa* informs me you complained of. I ſincerely petition Heaven that you may ſoon recover your health — and may peace of mind be yours, ſuch peace as the good and virtuous like you ought to enjoy.

Our Friend ſtill doubts you have not freely forgiven her the little plot ſhe engaged in — Conſider, that ſhe was morally certain you would never have come to the Farm, had you known who you was to meet; that circumſtance muſt excuſe the manner — But the forming of it?—You will ſay, was that right? Ah! I know not by what rule we muſt try that. Pity for me was her ſole inducement. — Let me not find that ſentiment more prevalent in her boſom than in yours. Perhaps I ſaw you *then*, for the laſt time. I have at preſent very little views of ever returning, and my ſeeing you at *D*— was no more than *the longing*, *longing look*, which we caſt behind us when we are quitting the world for ever.

However diſtant my body may be from you, my ſoul will ſtill hover about the ſpot which contains all it eſteems below; this privilege I think the greateſt tyrant would not diſallow. The intercourſe of ſoul cannot afford any uneaſineſs to your Huſband,

who thought it ſufficient to poſſeſs your perſon without your mind. Lovely as you are in perſon, and dear to my eyes as your charms render you, yet to poſſeſs no more of you than he does, I cannot envy him. No; the lovely portrait which I am this moment gazing on, with the aſſurance that your heart has ever been mine, conveys more rapture to my ſoul than Lord *Cleveland* could ever enjoy. There *I* triumph, and grant, gracious Heaven, I ever may! May no act of mine ever leſſen me in her eyes; may I be ſtill pitied, and ſtill loved as much as is conſiſtent with her virtue and honour. With the hope that Heaven will grant this prayer, I ſubſcribe myſelf Your faithful,

EDWARD COURTENAY.

LETTER XXXVII.

To EDWARD COURTENAY, *Eſq*;

TREMBLING with the conſciouſneſs of acting improperly, I take up my pen to diſcloſe the dictates of a heart too fatally engaged in an illaudable paſſion.—Alas! where are my reaſon and prudence? How has one imprudent ſtep involved me! A literary correſpondence with any Man is certainly

certainly (my ſituation conſidered) an impropriety; but with the Man I ought no longer to think of; whom I ſhould for ever drive from my heart; to engage in a correſpondence with him. Ah! where and by whom ſhall I ſtand excuſed? Will it to the misjudging and partial world be an extenuation, that I knew not whom I ſhould meet at *D*—? Even if it ſhould be admitted in that one inſtance, will my ſubſequent conduct eſcape its cenſures? Alas! I fear not. Will it not condemn me as one guilty as to intention, though innocent as to act? Into this fatal difficulty has the friendſhip of my *Lòuiſa* thrown me. Yet my forgiveneſs, the reality of which ſhe doubts, is freely her's. In ſome meaſure I own my lenity is owing to the exalted idea your behaviour has raiſed in me of your worth. On the retroſpect of your whole conduct I revere you for the reſpect and conſideration you ſhewed me. Your actions, your words were ſuch as I wiſhed to be witneſs of in the Man who profeſſes the ſentiments of me, you have ſo long cheriſhed. Your behaviour I cannot blame; but mine—Ah! let me not retrace the ſcene. — I will, if poſſible, forget it all — Indeed I ought to drive the circumſtances of that day from my memory, if it is in nature to do ſo. I hope, and think I may rely on your pru-

dence and real affection for me, never again to attempt a ſtep of the ſame ſort. Could I believe you would hereafter abuſe the lenity I have ſhewn, and ever take any meaſure to ſee me, be aſſured my laſting diſpleaſure would enſue. I would for ever drive you from my eſteem, as one unworthy of the leaſt regard on my ſide; but I truſt I ſhall not be deceived in you, nor ſhall cold ſuſpicion find harbour in my boſom.

I would wiſh to give eaſe to your heart, by making ſuch anſwers to your enquiries as might have that effect; but, alas! it would be doing the greateſt violence to truth, to ſay I was either well in health, or nearer that peace of mind you compliment me with ſaying, all like me ought to poſſeſs. I doubt, my Friend, both you and I muſt content ourſelves with deſerving, as much as poſſible, the happineſs of this world, but patiently wait to receive it in the next.

I know not whether I am juſtified in ſaying, Lord *Cleveland* is a bad Huſband; the world, perhaps, would think otherwiſe. He does not apparently deny me any thing. I have affluence, and am miſtreſs of my own time and actions. I might live in the *Grande Monde* if I choſe it — I may have what company I pleaſe — Of what, then, ſhould a Woman complain? Of nothing. "What can there be wanting?" as my Siſter

Siſter *Clara* anſwered to the many tender and anxious enquiries my dear Mother made of her, after her return from ſpending ſome time at *Cleveland-Place*. "Good God! what can ſhe poſſibly want? Has ſhe not a coach and ſix to wait her pleaſure; a princely allowance to diſpoſe of juſt as ſhe pleaſes; a noble houſe, rich furniture, and every thing a reaſonable Woman can deſire. If ſhe is not happy it is her own fault. This to be ſure might make ſome *reaſonable* Women happy; but if *Clara*'s reaſonable Woman has a heart, and the leaſt degree of ſenſibility, I doubt there would ſtill be ſomething wanting. My coach and ſix cannot drive me from myſelf; my reflections on my ſituation, however enviable they may be to her, occaſion a gloom, it is not in the power of riches or empty futile pleaſure to diſſipate.

The mind of Lord *Cleveland* is certainly not congenial with mine; there is no relation between them. His pleaſures centre in the chaſe or the bottle; of the latter, I think, he makes infinitely too free for the ſtrength of his conſtitution; but my remonſtrances on that head have been ſo extremely ill received, that I am ſilent on that head. There are people who attribute other failings to him, but it is not my intereſt to be too clear-ſighted. Though I

could not love, I have ever wiſhed to honour him; and I can truly acquit myſelf with reſpect to my obedience to him. I endeavour, as much as poſſible, to excuſe him to myſelf; I conſider him, as well as myſelf, intirely thrown out of our *bias*, our natural path in life. He might have made a very different Huſband to a woman whoſe heart he had gained; his little foibles would have ſunk under her eye, and a conformity of diſpoſition might have rendered both him and her happy. But then *he* was not conſtrained to become my Huſband; he cannot ſay I deceived him. My Letter to him ſufficiently explained the ſtate of my heart. He ought not then to complain; and yet, was he to know my preſent employment, I fear he would, and, ſome things conſidered, would have too much cauſe.

Lady *Louiſa* has had ſome opportunities of reading the diſpoſition of her Couſin, which I ſincerely wiſh had not offered. Her Friendſhip for you has made her draw compariſons to the diſadvantage of my Lord; from thence you may have gathered more knowledge of my ſituation, than from any hints I have occaſionally given.

Though what I have ſaid may not be altogether ſo ſatisfactory as my Friend might wiſh or expect, yet, certainly, I have

have ſaid as much as I ought; I will thankfully accept of your Friendſhip, and will not be diſpleaſed at (ſometimes) receiving all proper inſtances of it. I know not whether to rejoice, or be ſorry for your intention of remaining abroad. Heaven direct you to take thoſe ſteps moſt conducive to your honour and happineſs. It would be the higheſt felicity to me, to be aſſured you were in the way to be happy. Let what would be the means, *I think*, I ſhould rejoice.

Adieu! my good Friend; let us endeavour to think of each other with pleaſure, unallayed by the anxiety which has ſo long rendered us miſerable.

EMMA CLEVELAND.

LETTER XXXVIII.

To Lady LOUISA STRETTON.

I Have juſt this moment concluded one of the moſt laborious taſks in the world; from ſeeing the encloſed you will gueſs my meaning is writing to our abſent Friend. How many hours I ſpent before its completion! My God! how often have I checked my pen! Apprehenſive leſt I ſhould appear too warm, perhaps he will

think my ſtile too cold. I hope he will not take notice of the bliſters my frequent tears have made on the paper. Ah! my heart bled in each line!

For Heaven's ſake, my deareſt *Louiſa!* do not let him know the inſtances you have ſeen of Lord *Cleveland*'s behaviour to me. You will ſee I have glanced it over; I would not, for the world, have him know the many caprices you have been a witneſs of. Let not your friendſhip for this amiable man make you totally regardleſs of me. Conſider, I ſhall be very much reflected on for complaining of my Huſband; for ſuch he is, and his honour conſequently is mine. It is my duty, not only to think as favourably of him as I can myſelf, but to do all in my power to make his character reſpectable abroad. Your zeal, my Love, tranſports you to too great lengths; curb it for my ſake, and for the ſake of thoſe dearer to me than myſelf.

Adieu!

EMMA CLEVELAND.

LETTER XXXIX.

To Miſs WOODVILLE.

YOUR Letter, my deareſt *Fanny*, afforded me a very ſenſible pleaſure, as it conveyed to me the tender aſſurances of your

your love. You was extremely prudent to conceal from my dear Mother the circumſtances of my late diſtreſs. I would carefully conceal from her honoured boſom the leaſt knowledge of my being really as unhappy as I am.

Mr. *C.* has left *England*; he ſays moſt likely he ſhall never return; in all human probability I have looked on him for the laſt time; it is better it ſhould be ſo.

I believe I did not tell you Mrs. *Hotham* is here. I find ſhe is to be our gueſt for ſome time. I cannot ſay her company affords *me* much pleaſure; but that circumſtance is rendered quite eaſy to her; as ſhe conſiders my Lord and me as one, therefore if ſhe pleaſes him, of courſe I muſt come in for a ſhare. I wonder Lord *Cleveland* ſhould think her a proper companion for his Wife, but I believe he is too indifferent about me to concern himſelf whether ſhe is or not. Her character was but doubtful while her Huſband lived, and I fancy her conduct, during her widowhood, has not contributed greatly to raiſe it. However, my Lord will do as he pleaſes, let me ſay or think as I chuſe about it.

My principal reaſon for bringing the delectable Widow into my Letter is this: Full ſore againſt my inclinations, I am told

we are to ſpend good part of this winter in *London*. You will think all places muſt be the ſame to me; they are virtually ſo; but here I live a domeſtic, ſolitary life; if I go to town, I muſt give in to ſome of its diverſions; Mrs. *Hotham* muſt exhibit her *delicate* form at the reigning public places, and I know I ſhall be expected to attend her. My diſlike to a life of diſſipation, and more, the party, will ſignify no more than the *former diſlikes* I have ſhewn. I ſhall be conſtrained to go, and ſit a ſilent ſpectator to the modiſh flirtation of the buxom Widow and his Lordſhip. Though I am not jealous, yet I am ſorry my Lord ſhould ſo wholly forget *his* part of the marriage ceremony; but I think it is too apparent, even to me, that their intimacy is pretty notorious.

You will think I have as little regard to your morals, as my Lord ſeems to have for mine, ſhould I talk of introducing you to this Lady; yet this is an event I ſhall labour to bring about with the utmoſt celerity. A winter in town will do you no harm; and *you* only can judge how happy your ſociety will make me. I ſhall ſcarce feel myſelf wretched, when my ſweet *Fanny* is my companion. We will endeavour to procure a *Chaperon* for Mrs. *Hotham*, when we chuſe to be alone. I ſhall tell my Lord, I

inſiſt on his ſending you ſuch an invitation as ſhall induce my Father to permit us to fetch you; to *inſiſt*, will be uſing a language altogether new on my ſide, but the novelty, to a man fond of variety, may perhaps be pleaſing. I have abſolutely wrote myſelf into ſpirits, from the bare idea of the felicity I ſhall feel in embracing my beloved Siſter. I have mentioned fetching you; alas! my dear *Fanny*, can I then bear to view the place where I have been ſuperlatively happy, and as eminently miſerable? Can I, without a tear, behold the ſcenes of paſt delight? Again viſit thoſe walks where I have been accompanied by the moſt amiable of men? Ah! can I, without horror, recall to my bleeding memory all my former ſufferings? Ah! ye conſcious ſcenes, will ye not again tear my heart-ſtrings? Yet, yet to procure my *Fanny*'s ſociety, I will run all theſe hazards; yes, I will viſit each tree, each ſhrub, that has been remarked by him; the barks of ſome have been the record of Love; I will frequent his favourite walk.

"Perhaps where with *him* I have ſtray'd,
I may wander with pleaſure alone."

I ſcarcely expect to know your perſon, unleſs the ſweet emotion of my heart ſhould inſtinctively point you out to me. I doubt

you will find a ſtill greater alteration in me. Three years, my Dear, ſpent ſo joyleſs as my time has been, makes a viſible havock in the outward frame.

"The roſes will bloom when there is peace in the breaſt," but when corroding care is ſeated there, the pallid cheek and languid eye, all too plainly evince its inmate. "A penſive anguiſh pining at the heart," deſtroys the vivid glow of youth. However, melancholy ſcenes alone ſhall not make up the buſineſs of our life; I ſhall bring you a *little* Play-fellow, of whom I expect you to be very fond,—no other than my ſweet little Girl. She is now juſt two years old, and, if you will take a Mother's word, a perfect Angel in miniature. I have taught her to liſp your name; ſhe will be able to greet you when we meet. I need not tell you ſhe is my only comfort, and every hour I do not paſs unpleaſantly, muſt be placed to the account of my *Harriet*.

Expect a Letter ſoon from Lord *Cleveland*, in form, to my Father. I am determined it *ſhall* be ſo; on no other *terms* will I go to town, *if I can help it*; however, I dare ſay my Lord will oblige me. Adieu, my deareſt *Fanny*.

I am ever yours,

EMMA CLEVELAND.

LETTER XL.

To Lady LOUISA STRETTON.

Woodville-Hall.

I Am now writing to my deareſt *Louiſa*, from that very ſpot from whence I have ſo much cauſe to date all my infelicity. Yes, my *Louiſa!* I am ſeated in that identical room in which my poor Mother once found me ſo happy, and left me ſo truly wretched. But be gone from my aching memory ye former ſcenes!

I cannot deſcribe to you my ſenſations on finding myſelf once more claſped in the arms of my deareſt Mother, in a place where I had received ſo many convincing proofs of her tenderneſs.

My Siſter *Fanny* is grown quite a woman. I ſuppoſe there is no period in life in which three years can make ſo great a difference as from thirteen to ſixteen, the age ſhe attained the day after our arrival. She is rather taller than I am, and is, I think, exceeding handſome, though by no means a regular Beauty. My Mother thinks ſhe has more of *Clara*'s Perſon than of mine, but ſhe has ten thouſand times more ſweetneſs in her Manner. I ſhall be very happy in my companion, I make no doubt.

My

My Lord—or rather, I believe, Mrs. *Hotham*, is in ſuch a hurry to get to town, that our ſtay at *Woodville-Hall* will be extremely ſhort. My Brother knew we were expected here, but he has not been to ſee us. I fancy my Lord will not go twenty miles out of his way to call on him; therefore there is little probability of our meeting. I cannot be ſuch an hypocrite as to ſay I ſhall be exceedingly diſappointed in not ſeeing him: No one can ſuppoſe my partiality for him can be very violent. Captain *Brereton* has brought my Siſter to give us the meeting. What do you think was his reaſon for coming? Becauſe he had been told I was the direct contrary kind of woman to his Wife, therefore, he ſwore, I muſt be worth coming to ſee. After this ſhort ſpecimen, I need not tell you he is a droll character. *Fanny* is a great favourite with him. He ſays, it is plaguy hard that he ſhould have married the only one, out of three Siſters, who is not likely to be the favourite of any man. Theſe ſpeeches, you may believe, do not much contribute to the relaxing my Siſter's features, or to encreaſe the deſire of pleaſing her Huſband. A circumſtance, I dare ſay, ſhe has never kept in view, ſince what is generally called the honey-moon. Not but that the noble Captain has his failings, and of the capital ſort too; yet, there

there is a pleaſant freedom in his manner, that is very agreeable to indifferent people.

He has been ready to devour my little girl this morning. I told him he would extremely riſe in my eſteem if he was fond of children; he anſwered, it was wholly impoſſible not to be charmed with that beautiful *epitome* of myſelf. I laughed at his compliment, and ſaid I was ſtill convinced that he would be equally fond of all children. "Faith, ſo I am, (he replied) I ſhould be extravagantly fond of one I have—but her Mother has taken ſo much pains to ſpoil her, and to make her hate me, that I never ſee her without reflecting, with a heavy heart, that ſhe will a few years hence be the torment of ſome honeſt fellow like myſelf."

Mrs. *Brereton*, I plainly ſee, had much rather not have paid me the compliment of coming hither, as there is ſuch a thing obſerved as pre-eminence. She ſtill remembers ſhe is the eldeſt Siſter, and is not a little chagrined that I am treated with more deference than ſhe. Ah! how vain and ſilly her pride. What is the idle pomp of titles and rank? Are they not too often trappings to conceal the moſt painful feelings?

I doubt I am inexcuſable, yet I cannot help expreſſing my wiſh to hear ſomething of our *Pariſian* friends. I am ſometimes apprehenſive

apprehenſive leſt my Letter ſhould have been thought too indifferent—like one penned by a heart wholly incapable of Senſibility and Sentiment. Alas! he knows not the ſtruggles I had with myſelf, while I ſtrove for the ſanction of friendſhip, to expreſs a leſs ſerene paſſion.

I know, my deareſt *Louiſa*, I am above meaſure culpable. I ought not to indulge myſelf thus. But, alas! who can expect propriety and conſiſtency from ſuch a frail weak wretch as I am. However, I will not make you participater of my folly. I will lay down my pen ſince I ſeem to have loſt the proper uſe of it, and it has got above my command. I will hold it no longer than to expreſs a ſentiment, to which the moſt rigid virtue need not preſcribe limits—I mean my eſteem for you. In that, I ſhall never know a change, nor will my ſighing heart chide itſelf for ſaying ſo. Adieu!

EMMA CLEVELAND.

LETTER XLI.

To Lady CLEVELAND.

I Am ſenſibly pleaſed on finding you an inhabitant of the *Grande Monde*. You may, my dear *Emma*, think as you will about

about being the ſame in all places, but you muſt allow, from general and received opinion, that Solitude is the Nurſery of Melancholy. In the gay ſcenes, in which you cannot avoid ſometimes mixing, you have not time for deep reflection; and you well know, that an idea may be drove about, till it in a great meaſure loſes its ſeat and influence. Tho' it may be ſweet to cheriſh your favourite ideas, yet in a mind ſo virtuous as yours, the reflection is accompanied with the utmoſt pain. You know, I uſed to ſay, better not think at all, than to have one's thoughts a torment. The practical part is rather difficult, I confeſs: "But the more danger, the more glory, my Dear," as the widow *Brady* ſays.

But to proceed to buſineſs. I have received Letters from my Lord; they are not very ſatisfactory with reſpect to the affair he went upon. Sir *Charles* had Letters at the ſame time. Lady *Beville* has exchanged the vivacity of a *Frenchwoman*, for the formal gravity of an *Engliſh* Quaker, whom the ſpirit has not operated upon. I am convinced Lord *Stretton* has not communicated the whole of the buſineſs to me.

I ſuppoſe, one time or other, I may become acquainted with the circumſtances of their hiſtory, but it muſt be in his own way, and when he pleaſes. I am not very

anxious

anxious on the occaſion; they are not perſons for whom I feel much intereſt; in ſhort, I do not like them, the Lady particularly. Should my Lord and I become bone of one bone, I ſhall not be violently intimate with theſe folks, I can aſſure you. I ſhould be apprehenſive of their corrupting the morals of my *Caro Sposo*. I think his Lordſhip a little out in his knowledge of phyſiognomy in this caſe, or he would not have requeſted me to invite them hither. However, as they are my gueſts, I muſt treat them with politeneſs and attention.

As you conjecture, I have had other Letters from *Paris*. Encloſed in mine is one,—may I write the reſt? I believe I need not; a certain little palpitation of the heart will teach you to finiſh the ſentence. He knows not but that you are ſtill at *Cleveland-Place*. I ſhall make no apology for ſending the epiſtle with this; my letter will then, I am ſure, be a welcome one; not that I entertain the leaſt ſurmiſe that were mine unaccompanied it would not be received with pleaſure. I ſhould be inſenſible and ungrateful to doubt your friendſhip and eſteem; but, reſpecting the other, the pleaſure muſt be heightened where the ſentiment is more tender than friendſhip can expreſs.

Inform me how your Widow proceeds in the world; does ſhe enter into its follies with

with ſpirit? How does the ſweet *Fanny Woodville* like the hurry and confuſion of the town? a life ſhe has been a total ſtranger to. Let me hear all the news; ſtuff your Letter with the Anecdotes which at preſent reign; but, above all, tell me how you yourſelf bear the fatigue and impertinence which people of your rank muſt undergo; if my *hopeful Couſin* mends in his diſpoſition; how you paſs your time; if the town air agrees with the dear little *Harriet*; what are your employments, your amuſements, and reflections? What an Interrogatiſt you will think me — But I muſt have anſwers to all theſe queſtions, and that ſpeedily.

The news of the town and its anecdotes, *&c.* I ſhall communicate to my viſitors; it will afford us ſome converſation in theſe winter evenings. I hope to find ſome comfort in hearing you are more at eaſe than you were ſome time ſince; this you will believe is my chief reaſon for being ſo importunate. You know my earneſt wiſhes for your felicity to be as boundleſs as your merit.

Your faithful

LOUISA STRETTON.

LET-

LETTER XLII.

To Lady CLEVELAND.

[*Incloſed in the preceding.*]

SHALL I venture to declare to my amiable Friend, that her Letter diſappointed me?—Yet, while I do ſo, let me likewiſe acknowledge the favour I think your pity has induced you to ſhew me. You have acted with the greateſt propriety: Would to Heaven I could give laws to my ſentiments and feelings as you do.—But what right have I to be petulant? Pardon me, dear Excellence; I ought to revere your virtue and prudence, not to reproach your coldneſs. Alas! and is it to pity alone I am indebted for your valuable correſpondence? Am I not too aſſuming in wiſhing for ſomething more, ſome infinitely tenderer motive? I know, to ſolicit a return to my paſſion is extremely improper on my ſide; but conſider our ſituations, think of our former ſufferings, think our ſouls are wedded to each other; think, that I do not urge you to any thing baſe or unworthy, only to preſerve thoſe ſentiments for me, which once your Father allowed you to expreſs, and which it has, and ever ſhall be, my only buſineſs to deſerve. Oh! thou loveliеſt and beſt

beſt of women! can the auſtereſt virtue frown a denial to ſuch a requeſt? Why then have you filled your paper without one tender aſſurance, that you will for ever be mine in thought. You tell me, that you ought to drive me from your memory and heart: Ah! if you can even wiſh to ſtrive, the taſk cannot be a hard one. You will too ſoon ſucceed, and then what will become of the wretched exile?—Every vein of torture will again be opened in my bleeding boſom—You will be commended as a pattern of virtue, who could thus eaſily ſubdue an ill-fated paſſion; and *I* ſhall ſink into oblivion, or only be thought of as a weak wretch, whoſe paſſions were ſtronger than his reaſon.

I will ſtrive not to offend you with my paſſion, but then, my ever-adored Angel, you muſt likewiſe promiſe, never any more to tell me you take meaſures to drive me from your heart. I live, I breathe but in your eſteem—Do not, ah! do not rob me of the only comfort I am capable of taſting. I will remain for ever at this diſtance from you, if you will indulge me ſometimes with your welcome letters. Do not fear that I ſhall intrude myſelf on your retirement—I will never attempt to do ſo. Some people might accuſe me of coldneſs, to acquieſce ſo eaſily

in

in being robbed of all my happineſs; but I ſubmit, ſince I am well aſſured my chance of being ſtill beloved, reſts on my conducting myſelf in all my actions within the line of virtue. I am infinitely more calm than I was ſome hours ago. I have again peruſed your Letter. My emotions, when I firſt opened it, can only be known by thoſe who love like me. I have ſaid I was diſappointed.—You begin with condemning yourſelf—Ah! muſt the pureſt, the moſt conſtant, paſſion fill your boſom with ſuch endleſs regrets! *How has one imprudent ſtep involved me!* you exclaim.—Ah! my *Emma!* can your poſſeſſing the moſt exalted idea of my rectitude conſole me, for calling your accidentally ſeeing me *an imprudent ſtep?* Why ſhould you wiſh to forget your own conduct? Do you then grudge me the involuntary proofs you gave of your tenderneſs? Oh! the remembrance of them conſtitutes every ſcheme of my happineſs. Think, they were no more than virtue might authorize.

No, deareſt and moſt angelic of Women; no, you ſhall never be deceived in me; my heart is in your own hand, diſpoſe of it as you pleaſe; only be not too harſh, too ſevere, leſt it ſinks into deſpair.

The portrait you draw of Lord *C.* convinces me, however you may have ſtrove to varniſh

varniſh it over, I had before but too true an idea of his character. How could a Father conſign *ſuch* a Daughter to *ſuch* a Huſband! That thought I muſt not indulge; I feel my emotions too violent. Let me turn to the latter part of your dear Epiſtle; let me, if poſſible, receive conſolation for my afflictions in your aſſurances of friendſhip. Oh! may my fond heart teach itſelf to be ſatisfied with that *cold* ſentiment! May Heaven and you direct all its movements! With ſuch guides, I cannot miſs the way to Honour and Virtue; but to Felicity, unleſs Heaven, in pity to our ſufferings, allows you to diſpenſe it to me, that is a road I can never travel. However, I will endeavour to enjoy the ſhare which is allotted me, your Friendſhip. How ſtrangely inconſiſtent you will think me! Indeed, the many evils I have encountered, have weakened me every way. I am no longer what I was, but in my conſtant and ſteady attachment to you, there I can never alter; but while life and ſenſe inform, this wretched being ſhall ever remain

Your faithful and devoted

COURTENAY.

LET-

LETTER XLIII.

To EDWARD COURTENAY, *Esq*;

WHAT ſhall I ſay to the moſt amiable of men? How expreſs myſelf to ſpeak quiet to his mind, and not tranſgreſs thoſe rules I am conſtrained to preſcribe to my pen? Are you not, my dear Friend, too unreaſonable? Think of my ſituation; remember I am the Wife of another. Oh! *Courtenay!* chide me not for being cold and indifferent towards you. Alas! does the anguiſh which at this moment rends my heart-ſtrings, does that evince my coldneſs? Have pity on me, my Friend, and ſpare me again thoſe bitter and unjuſt reproaches. My own heart accuſes me of other ſentiments. What virtue and my ſituation can allow, I will freely grant you. Indeed, I cannot withhold that privilege; but you muſt not even wiſh for more; the limits of my attachment to you depends on yourſelf intirely. Act as I would have you, and here I ſwear, never to ſtrive to tear your image from my heart; but think not I will indulge myſelf in illicit wiſhes, or that I will uſe ſuch tender expreſſions in my Letters as happier times might have authoriſed. Fate, which has for ever ſevered

us,

us, likewiſe makes ſuch allowances lawleſs. Be contented with my aſſurances, that heart can never feel any other affection than the firſt. You will ever remain the object of it, unleſs you forfeit my eſteem by ſome improper procedure.

Even you can have no idea of the diſtreſs into which your Letter threw me; you cannot love me, if you ever again ſubject me to the like miſery. Confined as our portion of earthly felicity is, within the compaſs of Friendſhip, let us not make it leſs. Better we had never met, than that the meeting ſhould have rendered us thus wretched. Do not, I beſeech you, repine ſo much; let us ſubmit to our deſtiny.

Let me hear from you ſoon again, but be more compoſed, more yourſelf. Let it be ſuch a Letter, as may draw the tender tear of heightened friendſhip from my eyes, not rend the guſh of anguiſh from my pained boſom, as your laſt has done. Not but I have extracted ſome balm too. The effects of a violent attachment too often inſures its pardon. Judge then of the exceſs of mine, but do not preſume. I can die, but I will never be the ſlave of a paſſion for an undeſerving object. I have never yet been deceived in you; I ſincerely hope I never ſhall. I could not bear to be robbed of the exquiſite delight of knowing my

eſteem is fixed on the moſt amiable and worthy of men. Continue to be ſuch, and I will never regret the habitual tenderneſs of my ſoul. Though my heart has ever been the ſame in its feelings for you, and while it beats can never know a change, yet I would not tell you ſo but to diſſipate that gloom which ſeems to ſeize you. Do not, therefore, hereafter blame me if you find my future Letters leſs warm than this. I mean that they ſhould be ſo. It is highly proper, on all accounts, that, however tender our affections may be, the expreſſions of our lips and pens ſhould be chaſtened by prudence. When you reflect ſeriouſly, I am ſure you will coincide with

Your true and faithful Friend,

EMMA CLEVELAND.

LETTER XLIV.

To CHARLES CLEVELAND, *Eſq*;

SURELY of all men you are the moſt unaccountable and unreaſonable. What in the name of conſiſtency would you have me do? Am I not here in the ſituation you have ſo often wiſhed, ſo often laboured to place me? In ſhort, my dear *Charles*, am I not a perſon ſolely devoted to your intereſt?

intereſt? Can you doubt this aſſertion, when I have ſo fully demonſtrated to you that my own is ſo very nearly connected to yours? And yet, to pretend to be jealous of your Couſin, too! Upon my word, *Cleveland*, I muſt indulge my ſex's vivacity, and laugh a little. Don't be angry, my dear Lad; I can do your buſineſs and my own too with a ſmiling face, as well as if I wore the gloomy aſpect of *Caſſius* or *Zanga*.

So you really imagine that I take an infinite pleaſure in flirting about at public places; and that to partake of its amuſements is my ſole purpoſe for perſuading Lord *Cleveland* to bring his family up to town this winter. You have but an indifferent idea of my ſcheming talents if you think you have divined my real motives. You ought, from what has paſſed between us, to have a more exalted opinion of my faculties that way.

Have you forgot your original plan? Was it not to make a laſting breach between Lord and Lady *Cleveland*, to prevent all poſſibility of their having an heir to jockey you out of the eſtate and title? Recollect yourſelf. Is this breach ſo likely to be effected while they remain together in the country? How in nature ſhould it? She is all compliance to his wayward humours, and would as ſoon think

of turning the current of the mill-ſtream, as to oppoſe his will. Even if it were poſſible for a man to have a worſe temper than his Lordſhip poſſeſſes, I do not think it poſſible that he could find cauſe in her to excite his anger. But it does not become me to write her panegyric, at the time I am meditating miſchief againſt her; ſo let us caſt a veil over her virtues, and, if we cannot develope her faults, let us ſtrive to make ſome for her.

But now to let you into my motives for contriving the *London* expedition. No woman in the world is ſo likely to gain admirers in the *beau-monde*, as a beautiful one, neglected by her Huſband. That is a poſition I believe you will not deny. Every one who knows any thing of this Family, knows Lady *Cleveland* was ſacrificed, from ambitious motives, to your Couſin; they muſt ſee, however circumſpect her behaviour is, that ſhe cannot love him. Many men will be ſtriving to gain that place in her affections, which her Huſband can never obtain. Do you begin to conceive me yet? Will not the aſſiduity of theſe men make Lord *Cleveland* jealous? I fancy now you begin to have a tolerable notion of my ſcheme.

I am a wonderful favourite of my Lord's; I find I can manage him as I pleaſe;

pleaſe; let me alone to make my *advantage* of it. Be aſſured, every nerve ſhall be ſtrained in your ſervice, and that of all men you are the deareſt to me. But then, my *Charles*, you muſt conſent to be guided ſolely by me. Reſt all your affairs implicitly in my hands. You ought not to doubt me; ſurely I have been tried and known.

I will not finiſh my Letter till to-morrow.

My reaſon for not cloſing my Paper was, that we were going to the *Soho* Aſſembly. I am not fond of dancing, but I pretended I was, which obliged Lord *Cleveland* to offer me his hand. *Fanny Woodville* had been engaged before I diſcovered my inclination, otherwiſe I dare ſay ſhe would have given up her amuſement, rather than her Siſter ſhould ſit without a companion. I had obſerved Lord *Belford* ogling Lady *Cleveland* ſome time through his *Opera-glaſs*, and I gave him this opportunity of addreſſing himſelf to her. He ſeemed willing to improve the occaſion; in a few minutes I had the ſatisfaction of ſeeing his Lordſhip ſeated by her Ladyſhip. He is as likely a man to try to gain a married woman's heart, as any I know, eſpecially ſince his affair laſt winter with Lady ——, which has given him a prodigious *éclat* with the Females.

Females. I am ſure his character is unknown to Lady *Cleveland*, and it ſhall be my buſineſs to keep her in ignorance on that head. Was ſhe like the generality of the Women of Quality, I need not be ſo cautious, for ſhe would like him the better for having been engaged in ſo many amours; but ſhe is quite *outrè*.

I made Lord *Cleveland*, as if by accident, obſerve their ſituation, but he was too much engroſſed himſelf to diſcover any impropriety, nor indeed is it poſſible he ſhould, for what harm could there be in a man ſpeaking to a woman in a public aſſembly?

By his manner and geſtures, I imagined Lord *Belford* to be on his old ſubject; I therefore edged up to them, to get within ear-ſhot of their converſation. He had that moment taken her hand:—"Suffer me, (ſaid he,) to lead you to the Sett; you ſurely can have no objection to join a company of which your Lord makes one. Why will you be ſo cruel as to refuſe me," (added he, looking tenderly at her, and again taking her hand, which ſhe had withdrawn.) She ſmiling, anſwered, "I have told your Lordſhip I am no dancer, I wiſh to be excuſed."—"Cruel creature! (ſighed he,) you deny me every favour I aſk." I wiſh I had been witneſs to all he had ſaid

preced-

preceding this laſt ſpeech, as I ſhould have been glad to know what *favours* ſhe had refuſed him, or he, on ſo ſhort an acquaintance, could have the aſſurance to aſk.

I think I may venture to pronounce his Lordſhip is a man for my purpoſe; if I do not make ſomething of him, never pay any regard to my promiſes more.

You muſt not entertain a thought of our meeting yet, and renewing, as you ſay, our former endearments; we have other work of ſuperior conſequence firſt to be adjuſted; our pleaſures muſt give way to buſineſs; not but I ſhould be infinitely happy to ſee my dear *Charles*, were ſuch an indulgence conſiſtent with my views, and I ſincerely hope the time will come when we ſhall meet, to part no more; but I do not think your Couſin will be very glad of our company. It behoves us to be cautious to the laſt degree that he remains in total ignorance of our *intimacy*, or even acquaintance; on that circumſtance depends more than you at preſent think of.

Be contented with the knowledge that our intereſts are as much one, as if we were that ſtrange compound Man and Wife.

Farewell! my deareſt *Charles!* I am totally yours,

ELIZA HOTHAM.

END *of the* FIRST VOLUME.

BRITISH
27 JY 88
MUSEUM